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Denis Duval.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY TREE.



O plague my wife, who does not understand pleasantries in the matter of pedigree, I once drew a fine family tree of my ancestors, with Claude Duval, captain and highwayman, *sus. per coll.* in the reign of Charles II., dangling from a top branch. But this is only my joke with her High Mightiness my wife, and his Serene Highness my son. None of us Duvals have been *suspercolated* to my knowledge. As a boy, I have tasted a rope's-end often enough, but not round my neck: and the persecutions endured by my ancestors in France for our Protestant religion, which we early received and steadily maintained, did not bring death upon us, as upon many of our faith, but only fines and poverty, and exile from our native country.

The world knows how the bigotry of Lewis XIV. drove many families out of France into England, who have become trusty and loyal subjects of

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the British crown. Among the thousand fugitives were my grandfather and his wife. They settled at Winchelsea, in Sussex, where there has been a French church ever since Queen Bess's time, and the dreadful day of Saint Bartholomew. Three miles off, at Rye, is another colony and church of our people : another *fester Burg*, where, under Britannia's sheltering buckler, we have been free to exercise our fathers' worship, and sing the songs of our Zion.

My grandfather was elder and precentor of the church of Winchelsea, the pastor being Monsieur Denis, father of Rear-Admiral Sir Peter Denis, Baronet, my kind and best patron. He sailed with Anson in the famous *Centurion*, and obtained his first promotion through that great seaman: and of course you will all remember that it was Captain Denis who brought our good Queen Charlotte to England (7th September, 1761) after a stormy passage of nine days, from Stade. As a child I was taken to his house in Great Ormond Street, Queen Square, London, and also to the Admiral's country seat, Valence, near Westerham, in Kent, where Colonel Wolfe lived, father of the famous General James Wolfe, the glorious conqueror of Quebec.*

My father, who was of a wandering disposition, happened to be at Dover in the year 1761, when the Commissioners passed through, who were on their way to sign the Treaty of Peace, known as the Peace of Paris. He had parted, after some hot words, I believe, from his mother, who was, like himself, of a quick temper, and he was on the look-out for employment when Fate threw these gentlemen in his way. Mr. Duval spoke English, French, and German, his parents being of Alsace, and Mr. —— having need of a confidential person to attend him, who was master of the languages, my father offered himself, and was accepted mainly through the good offices of Captain Denis, our patron, whose ship was then in the Downs. Being at Paris, father must needs visit Alsace, our native country, and having scarce one guinea to rub against another, of course chose to fall in love with my mother and marry her out of hand. *Mons. mon père*, I fear, was but a prodigal ; but he was his parents' only living child, and when he came home to Winchelsea, hungry and penniless, with a wife on his hand, they killed their fattest calf, and took both wanderers in. A short while after her marriage, my mother inherited some property from her parents in France, and most tenderly nursed my grandmother through a long illness, in which the good lady died. Of these matters I knew nothing personally, being at the time a child two or three years old ; crying and sleeping, drinking and eating, growing, and having my infantile ailments, like other little darlings.

A violent woman was my mother, jealous, hot, and domineering, but generous and knowing how to forgive. I fancy my papa gave her too

* I remember a saying of G—— Aug——st——s S——lw——n, Esq., regarding the General, which has not been told, as far as I know, in the anecdotes. A Macaroni guardsman, speaking of Mr. Wolfe, asked, "Was he a Jew ? Wolfe was a Jewish name." "Certainly," says Mr. S——lw——n, "Mr. Wolfe was the *Height of Abraham*."

many opportunities of exercising this virtue, for, during his brief life, he was ever in scrapes and trouble. He met with an accident when fishing off the French coast, and was brought home and died, and was buried at Winchelsea; but the cause of his death I never knew until my good friend Sir Peter Denis told me in later years, when I had come to have troubles of my own.

I was born on the same day with his Royal Highness the Duke of York, viz. the 13th of August, 1763, and used to be called the Bishop of Osnaburg by the boys in Winchelsea, where between us French boys and the English boys I promise you there was many a good battle. Besides being *ancien* and precentor of the French church at Winchelsea, grandfather was a perruquier and barber by trade, and, if you must know it, I have curled and powdered a gentleman's head before this, and taken him by the nose and shaved him. I do not brag of having used lather and brush: but what is the use of disguising anything? *Tout se sait*, as the French have it, and a great deal more too. There is Sir Humphrey Howard, who served with me second-lieutenant in the *Meleager*—he says he comes from the N—f—lk Howards; but his father was a shoemaker, and we always called him Humphrey Snob in the gunroom.

In France very few wealthy ladies are accustomed to nurse their children, and the little ones are put out to farmers' wives and healthy nurses, and perhaps better cared for than by their own meagre mothers. My mother's mother, an honest farmer's wife in Lorraine (for I am the first gentleman of my family, and chose my motto* of *fecimus ipsi* not with pride, but with humble thanks for my good fortune), had brought up Mademoiselle Clarisse de Viomesnil, a Lorraine lady, between whom and her foster-sister there continued a tender friendship long after the marriage of both. Mother came to England, the wife of Monsieur mon papa; and Mademoiselle de Viomesnil married in her own country. She was of the Protestant branch of the Viomesnil, and all the poorer in consequence of her parents' fidelity to their religion. Other members of the family were of the Catholic religion, and held in high esteem at Versailles.

Some short time after my mother's arrival in England, she heard that her dear foster-sister Clarisse was going to marry a Protestant gentleman of Lorraine, Vicomte de Barr, only son of M. le Comte de Saverne, a chamberlain to his Polish Majesty King Stanislas, father of the French Queen. M. de Saverne, on his son's marriage, gave up to the Vicomte de Barr his house at Saverne, and here for a while the newly married couple lived. I do not say the young couple, for the Vicomte de Barr was five-and-twenty years older than his wife, who was but eighteen when her parents married her. As my mother's eyes were very weak, or, to say truth, she was not very skilful in reading, it used to be my lot as a boy to spell out my lady Viscountess's letters to her *sœur de lait*, her good

* The Admiral insisted on taking or on a bend sable, three razors displayed proper, with the above motto. The family have adopted the mother's coat of arms.

Ursule : and many a smart rap with the rolling-pin have I had over my noodle from mother as I did my best to read. It was a word and a blow with mother. She did not spare the rod and spoil the child, and that I suppose is the reason why I am so well grown—six feet two in my stockings, and fifteen stone four last Tuesday, when I was weighed along with our pig. Mem.—My neighbour's hams at Rose Cottage are the best in all Hampshire.

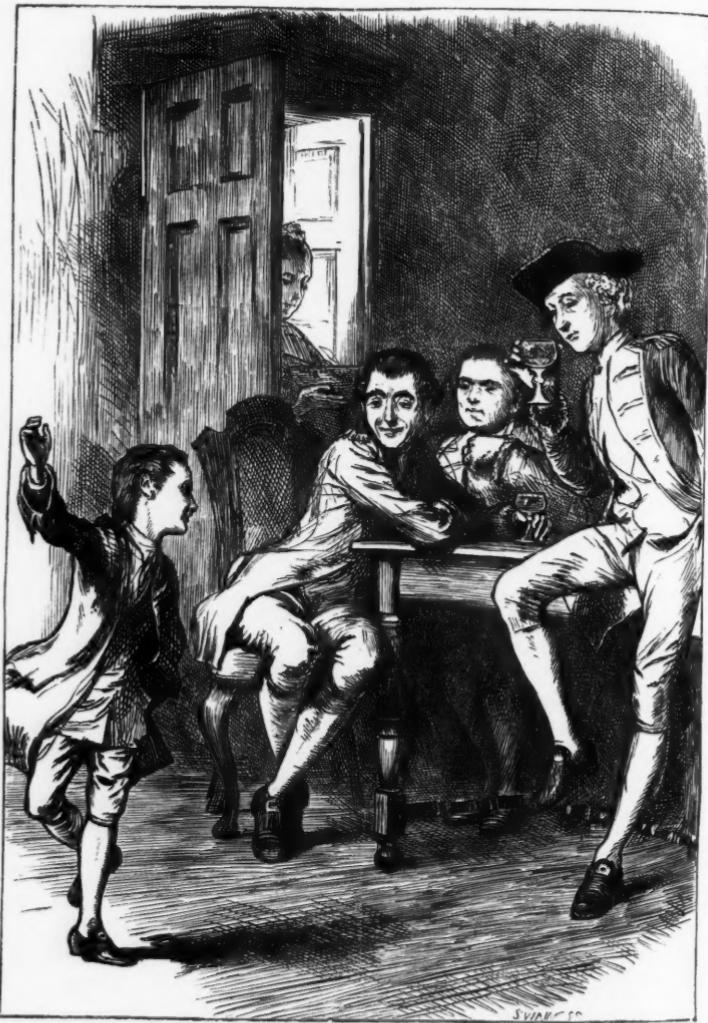
I was so young that I could not understand all I read. But I remember mother used to growl in her rough way (she had a grenadier height and voice, and a pretty smart pair of black whiskers too)—my mother used to cry out, “She suffers—my Biche is unhappy—she has got a bad husband. He is a brute. All men are brutes.” And with this she would glare at grandpapa, who was a very humble little man, and trembled before his *bru*, and obeyed her most obsequiously. Then mother would vow she would go home, she would go and succour her Biche ; but who would take care of these two imbeciles ? meaning me and my grandpapa. Besides, Madame Duval was wanted at home. She dressed many ladies' heads, with very great taste, in the French way, and could shave, frizz, cut hair and tie a queue along with the best barber in the county. Grandfather and the apprentice wove the wigs ; when I was at home, I was too young for that work, and was taken off from it, and sent to a famous good school, Pocock's grammar-school at Rye, where I learned to speak English like a Briton—born as I am—and not as we did at home, where we used a queer Alsatian jargon of French and German. At Pocock's I got a little smattering of Latin, too, and plenty of fighting for the first month or two. I remember my patron coming to see me in uniform, blue and white laced with gold, silk stockings and white breeches, and two of his officers along with him. “Where is Denis Duval ?” says he, peeping into our school-room, and all the boys looking round with wonder at the great gentleman. Master Denis Duval was standing on a bench at that very moment for punishment for fighting I suppose, with a black eye as big as an omelette. “Denis would do very well if he would keep his fist off other boys' noses,” says the master, and the captain gave me a seven-shilling piece, and I spent it all but twopence before the night was over, I remember. Whilst I was at Pocock's, I boarded with Mr. Rudge, a tradesman, who besides being a grocer at Rye, was in the seafaring way, and part owner of a fishing-boat ; and he took *some very queer fish* in his nets, as you shall hear soon. He was a chief man among the Wesleyans, and I attended his church with him, not paying much attention to those most serious and sacred things in my early years, when I was a thoughtless boy, caring for nothing but lollipops, hoops, and marbles.

Captain Denis was a very pleasant, lively gentleman, and on this day he asked the master, Mr. Coates, what was the Latin for a holiday, and hoped Mr. C. would give one to his boys. Of course we sixty boys shouted yes to that proposal ; and as for me, Captain Denis cried out, “Mr. Coates, I press this fellow with the black eye here, and intend to take him to dine

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LITTLE DENIS DANCES AND SINGS BEFORE THE NAVY GENTLEMEN.

with me at the Star." You may be sure I skipped off my bench, and followed my patron. He and his two officers went to the Star, and after dinner called for a crown bowl of punch, and though I would drink none of it, never having been able to bear the taste of rum or brandy, I was glad to come out and sit with the gentlemen, who seemed to be amused with my childish prattle. Captain Denis asked me what I learned, and I daresay I bragged of my little learning: in fact I remember talking in a pompous way about Corderius and Cornelius Nepos, and I have no doubt gave myself very grand airs. He asked whether I liked Mr. Rudge, the grocer, with whom I boarded. I did not like him much, I said, but I hated Miss Rudge and Bevil the apprentice most because they were always . . . here I stopped. "But there is no use in telling tales out of school," says I. "We don't do that at Pocock's, we don't."

And what was my grandmother going to make of me? I said I should like to be a sailor, but a gentleman sailor, and fight for King George. And if I did I would bring all my prize-money home to Agnes, that is, almost all of it—only keep a little of it for myself.

"And so you like the sea, and go out sometimes?" asks Mr. Denis.

Oh, yes, I went out fishing. Mr. Rudge had a half share of a boat along with grandfather, and I used to help to clean her, and was taught to steer her, with many a precious slap on the head if I got her in the wind; and they said I was a very good look-out. I could see well, and remember bluffs and headlands and so forth; and I mentioned several places, points of our coasts, ay, and the French coast too.

"And what do you fish for?" asks the captain.

"Oh, sir, I'm not to say anything about that, Mr. Rudge says!" on which the gentlemen roared with laughter. *They knew Master Rudge's game*, though I in my innocence did not understand it.

"And so you won't have a drop of punch?" asks Captain Denis.

"No, sir, I made a vow I would not, when I saw Miss Rudge so queer."

"Miss Rudge is often queer, is she?"

"Yes, the nasty pig! And she calls names, and slips down stairs, and knocks the cups and saucers about, and fights the apprentice, and—but I mustn't say anything more. I never tell tales, I don't!"

In this way I went on prattling with my patron and his friends, and they made me sing them a song in French, and a song in German, and they laughed and seemed amused at my antics and capers. Captain Denis walked home with me to our lodgings, and I told him how I liked Sunday the best day of the week—that is, every other Sunday—because I went away quite early, and walked three miles to mother and grandfather at Winchelsea, and saw Agnes.

And who, pray, was Agnes? To-day her name is Agnes Duval, and she sits at her work-table hard-by. The lot of my life has been changed by knowing her. To win such a prize in life's lottery is given but to very few. What I have done (of any worth) has been done in trying to

lose her. I might have remained, but for her, in my humble native lot, to be neither honest nor happy, but that my good angel yonder succoured me. All I have I owe to her: but I pay with all I have, and what creature can do more?

CHAPTER II.

THE HOUSE OF SAVERNE.

MADMOISELLE DE SAVERNE came from Alsace, where her family occupied a much higher rank than that held by the worthy Protestant elder from whom her humble servant is descended. Her mother was a Viomesnil; her father was of a noble Alsatian family, Counts of Barr and Saverne. The old Count de Saverne was alive, and a chamberlain in the court of his Polish Majesty good King Stanislas at Nanci, when his son the Vicomte de Barr, a man already advanced in years, brought home his blooming young bride to that pretty little capital.

The Count de Saverne was a brisk and cheery old gentleman, as his son was gloomy and severe. The count's hotel at Nanci was one of the gayest of the little court. His Protestantism was by no means austere. He was even known to regret that there were no French convents for noble damsels of the Protestant confession, as there were across the Rhine, where his own two daughters might be bestowed out of the way. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne were ungainly in appearance, fierce and sour in temper, resembling, in these particulars, their brother Mons. le Baron de Barr.

In his youth, Monsieur de Barr had served not without distinction, being engaged against Messieurs the English at Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, where he had shown both courage and capacity. His Protestantism prevented his promotion in the army. He left it, steadfast in his faith, but soured in his temper. He did not care for whist or music, like his easy old father. His appearance at the count's little suppers was as cheerful as a death's-head at a feast. M. de Barr only frequented these entertainments to give pleasure to his young wife, who pined and was wretched in the solitary family mansion of Saverne, where the Vicomte took up his residence when first married.

He was of an awful temper, and subject to storms of passion. Being a very conscientious man, he suffered extremely after one of these ebullitions of rage. Between his alternations of anger and remorse, his life was a sad one; his household trembled before him, and especially the poor little wife whom he had brought out of her quiet country village to be the victim of his rage and repentances. More than once she fled to the old Count of Saverne at Nanci, and the kindly selfish old gentleman used his feeble endeavours to protect his poor little daughter-in-law. Quickly after these quarrels letters would arrive, containing vows of the

most abject repentance on the baron's part. These matrimonial campaigns followed a regular course. First rose the outbreak of temper; then the lady's flight ensued to papa-in-law at Nanci; then came letters expressive of grief; then the repentant criminal himself arrived, whose anguish and cries of *mea culpa* were more insupportable than his outbreaks of rage. After a few years, Madame de Barr lived almost entirely with her father-in-law at Nanci, and was scarcely seen in her husband's gloomy mansion of Saverne.

For some years no child was born of this most unhappy union. Just when poor King Stanislas came by his lamentable death (being burned at his own fire), the old Count de Saverne died, and his son found that he inherited little more than his father's name and title of Saverne, the family estate being greatly impoverished by the late count's extravagant and indolent habits, and much weighed down by the portions awarded to the Demoiselles de Saverne, the elderly sisters of the present elderly lord.

The town house at Nanci was shut up for a while; and the new lord of Saverne retired to his castle with his sisters and his wife. With his Catholic neighbours the stern Protestant gentleman had little communion; and the society which frequented his dull house chiefly consisted of Protestant clergymen who came from the other side of the Rhine. Along its left bank, which had only become French territory of late years, the French and German languages were spoken indifferently; in the latter language M. de Saverne was called the Herr von Zabern. After his father's death, Herr von Zabern may have melted a little, but he soon became as moody, violent, and ill-conditioned as ever the Herr von Barr had been.

Saverne was a little country town, with the crumbling old Hôtel de Saverne in the centre of the place, and a straggling street stretching on either side. Behind the house were melancholy gardens, squared and clipped after the ancient French fashion, and, beyond the garden wall, some fields and woods, part of the estate of the Saverne family. These fields and woods were fringed by another great forest, which had once been the property of the house of Saverne, but had been purchased from the late easy proprietor, by Messeigneurs de Rohan, Princes of Empire, of France, and the Church, Cardinals, and Archbishops of Strasbourg, between whom and their gloomy Protestant neighbour there was no good-will. Not only questions of faith separated them, but questions of *chasse*. The Count de Saverne, who loved shooting, and beat his meagre woods for game with a couple of lean dogs, and a fowling-piece over his shoulder, sometimes came in sight of the grand hunting-parties of Monseigneur the Cardinal, who went to the chase like a prince as he was, with piqueurs and horn-blowers, whole packs of dogs, and a troop of gentlemen in his uniform. Not seldom his Eminence's keepers and M. de Saverne's solitary garde-chasse had quarrels. "Tell your master that I will shoot any red-legs which come upon my land," M. de Saverne said in one of these controversies as he held up a partridge which he had just brought down; and the keeper knew the moody nobleman would be true to his word.

Two neighbours so ill-disposed towards one another were speedily at law: and in the courts at Strasbourg a poor provincial gentleman was likely to meet with scanty justice when opposed to such a powerful enemy as the Prince Archbishop of the province, one of the greatest noblemen of the kingdom. Boundary questions, in a land where there are no hedges, game, forest, and fishery questions—how can I tell, who am no lawyer, what set the gentlemen at loggerheads? In later days I met one M. Georgel, an Abbé who had been a secretary of the Prince Cardinal, and he told me that M. de Saverne was a headlong, violent, ill-conditioned little *mauvais coucheur*, as they say in France, and ready to quarrel with or without a reason.

These quarrels naturally took the Count de Saverne to his advocates and lawyers at Strasbourg, and he would absent himself for days from home, where his poor wife was perhaps not sorry to be rid of him. It chanced, on one of these expeditions to the chief town of his province, that he fell in with a former comrade in his campaigns of Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, an officer of Soubise's regiment, the Baron de la Motte.* Lamotte had been destined to the Church, like many cadets of good family, but, his elder brother dying, he was released from the tonsure and the seminary, and entered the army under good protection. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne remembered this M. de la Motte at Nanci in old days. He bore the worst of characters; he was gambler, intriguer, duellist, profligate. I suspect that most gentlemen's reputations came off ill under the tongues of these old ladies, and have heard of other countries where mesdemoiselles are equally hard to please. "Well, have we not all our faults?" I imagine M. de Saverne saying, in a rage. "Is there no such thing as calumny? Are we never to repent, if we have been wrong? I know he has led a wild youth. Others may have done as much. But prodigals have been reclaimed ere now, and I for my part will not turn my back on this one." "Ah, I wish he had!" De la Motte said to me myself in later days, "but it was his fate, his fate!"

One day, then, the Count de Saverne returns home from Strasbourg with his new friend; presents the Baron de la Motte to the ladies of his house, makes the gloomy place as cheerful as he can for his guest, brings forth the best wine from his cave, and beats his best covers for game. I myself knew the baron some years later;—a handsome, tall, sallow-faced man, with a shifty eye, a soft voice, and a grand manner. Monsieur de Saverne for his part was short, black, and ill-favoured, as I have heard my mother say. But Mrs. Duval did not love him, fancying that he ill-treated her Biche. Where she disliked people, my worthy parent would never allow them a single good quality; but she always averred that Monsieur de la Motte was a perfect fine gentleman.

The intimacy between these two gentlemen increased apace. M. de

* That unlucky Prince de Rohan was to suffer by another Delamotte, who, with his "Valois" of a wife, played such a notorious part in the famous "diamond necklace" business, but the two *worthies* were not, I believe, related.—D. D.

la Motte was ever welcome at Saverne : a room in the house was called his room : their visitor was an acquaintance of their enemy the Cardinal also, and would often come from the one château to the other. Laughingly he would tell how angry Monseigneur was with his neighbour. He wished he could make peace between the two houses. He gave quite good advice to Monsieur de Saverne, and pointed out the danger he ran in provoking so powerful an adversary. Men had been imprisoned for life for less reason. The Cardinal might get a *lettre de cachet* against his obstinate opponent. He could, besides, ruin Saverne with fines and law-costs. The contest between the two was quite unequal, and the weaker party must inevitably be crushed, unless these unhappy disputes should cease. As far as the ladies of the house dared speak, they coincided in the opinion of M. de la Motte, and were for submission and reconciliation with their neighbours. Madame de Saverne's own relations heard of the feud, and implored the count to bring it to an end. It was one of these, the Baron de Viomesnil, going to command in Corsica, who entreated M. de Saverne to accompany him on the campaign. Anywhere the count was safer than in his own house with an implacable and irresistible enemy at his gate. M. de Saverne yielded to his kinsman's importunities. He took down his sword and pistols of Laufeldt from the wall, where they had hung for twenty years. He set the affairs of his house in order, and after solemnly assembling his family, and on his knees confiding it to the gracious protection of heaven, he left home to join the suite of the French General.

A few weeks after he left home—several years after his marriage—his wife wrote to inform him that she was likely to be a mother. The stern man, who had been very unhappy previously, and chose to think that his wife's barrenness was a punishment of Heaven for some crime of his or hers, was very much moved by this announcement. I have still at home a German Bible which he used, and in which is written in the German a very affecting prayer composed by him, imploring the Divine blessing upon the child about to be born, and hoping that this infant might grow in grace, and bring peace and love and unity into the household. It would appear that he made no doubt he should have a son. His hope and aim were to save in every possible way for this child. I have read many letters of his which he sent from Corsica to his wife, and which she kept. They were full of strange minute orders, as to the rearing and education of this son that was to be born. He enjoined saving amounting to niggardliness in his household, and calculated how much might be put away in ten, in twenty years, so that the coming heir might have a property worthy of his ancient name. In case he should fall in action, he laid commands upon his wife to pursue a system of the most rigid economy, so that the child at coming of age might be able to appear creditably in the world. In these letters, I remember, the events of the campaign were dismissed in a very few words : the main part of the letters consisted of prayers, speculations, and prophecies regarding the child, and sermons couched in the language of the writer's stern creed. When

the child was born, and a girl appeared in place of the boy, upon whom the poor father had set his heart, I hear the family were so dismayed, that they hardly dared to break the news to the chief of the house.

Who told me? The same man who said he wished he had never seen M. de Saverne: the man for whom the unhappy gentleman had conceived a warm friendship:—the man who was to bring a mysterious calamity upon those whom, as I do think, and in his selfish way, he loved sincerely, and he spoke at a time when he could have little desire to deceive me.

The lord of the castle is gone on the campaign. The *châtelaine* is left alone in her melancholy tower with her two dismal duennas. My good mother, speaking in later days about these matters, took up the part of her Biche against the Ladies of Barr and their brother, and always asserted that the tyranny of the duennas, and the meddling, and the verbosity, and the ill-temper of M. de Saverne himself, brought about the melancholy events which now presently ensued. The Count de Saverne was a little man (my mother said) who loved to hear himself talk, and who held forth from morning till night. His life was a fuss. He would weigh the coffee, and count the lumps of sugar, and have a finger in every pie in his frugal house. Night and morning he preached sermons to his family, and he continued to preach when not *en chaire*, layingdown the law upon all subjects, untiringly voluble. Cheerfulness in the company of such a man was hypocrisy. Mesdames de Barr had to disguise weariness, to assume an air of contentment, and to appear to be interested when the count preached. As for the count's sisters, they were accustomed to listen to their brother and lord with respectful submission. They had a hundred domestic occupations: they had baking and boiling, and pickling, and washing, and endless embroidery: the life of the little château was quite supportable to them. They knew no better. Even in their father's days at Nanci, the ungainly women kept pretty much aloof from the world, and were little better than domestic servants in waiting on Monseigneur.

And Madame de Saverne, on her first entrance into the family, accepted the subordinate position meekly enough. She spun and she bleached, and she worked great embroideries, and busied herself about her house, and listened demurely whilst Monsieur le Comte was preaching. But then there came a time when her duties interested her no more, when his sermons became especially wearisome, when sharp words passed between her and her lord, and the poor thing exhibited symptoms of impatience and revolt. And with the revolt arose awful storms and domestic battles; and after battles, submission, reconciliation, forgiveness, hypocrisy.

It has been said that Monsieur de Saverne loved the sound of his own croaking voice, and to hold forth to his home congregation. Night after night he and his friend M. de la Motte would have religious disputes together, in which the Huguenot gentleman flattered himself that he constantly had the better of the ex-pupil of the seminary. I was not present naturally, not setting my foot on French ground until five-and-

twenty years after, but I can fancy Madame the Countess sitting at her tambour frame, and the old duenna ladies at their cards, and the combat of the churches going on between these two champions in the little old saloon of the Hôtel de Saverne. "As I hope for pardon," M. de la Motte said to me at a supreme moment of his life, "and to meet those whom on earth I loved and made unhappy, no wrong passed between Clarisse and me, save that wrong which consisted in disguising from her husband the regard we had for one another. Once, twice, thrice, I went away from their house, but that unhappy Saverne would bring me back, and I was only too glad to return. I would let him talk for hours—I own it—so that I might be near Clarisse. I had to answer from time to time, and rubbed up my old seminary learning to reply to his sermons. I must often have spoken at random, for my thoughts were far away from the poor man's *radotages*, and he could no more change my convictions than he could change the colour of my skin. Hours and hours thus passed away. They would have been intolerably tedious to others: they were not so to me. I preferred that gloomy little château to the finest place in Europe. To see Clarisse, was all I asked. Denis! There is a power irresistible impelling all of us. From the moment I first set eyes on her, I knew she was my fate. I shot an English grenadier at Hastenbeck, who would have bayoneted poor Saverne but for me. As I lifted him up from the ground, I thought, 'I shall have to repent of ever having seen that man.' I felt the same thing, Duval, when I saw you." And as the unhappy gentleman spoke, I remembered how I for my part felt a singular and unpleasant sensation as of terror and approaching evil when first I looked at that handsome, ill-omened face.

I thankfully believe the words which M. de la Motte spoke to me at a time when he could have no cause to disguise the truth; and am assured of the innocence of the Countess de Saverne. Poor lady! if she erred in thought, she had to pay so awful a penalty for her crime, that we humbly hope it has been forgiven her. She was not true to her husband, though she did him no wrong. If, while trembling before him, she yet had dissimulation enough to smile and be merry, I suppose no preacher or husband would be very angry with her for *that* hypocrisy. I have seen a slave in the West Indies soundly cuffed for looking sulky; we expect our negroes to be obedient and to be happy too.

Now when M. de Saverne went away to Corsica, I suspect he was strongly advised to take that step by his friend M. de la Motte. When he was gone, M. de la Motte did not present himself at the Hôtel de Saverne, where an old school-fellow of his, a pastor and preacher from Kehl, on the German Rhine bank, was installed in command of the little garrison, from which its natural captain had been obliged to withdraw; but there is no doubt that poor Clarisse deceived this gentleman and her two sisters-in-law, and acted towards them with a very culpable hypocrisy.

Although there was a deadly feud between the two châteaux of Saverne—namely, the Cardinal's new-built castle in the Park, and the

count's hotel in the little town—yet each house knew more or less of the other's doings. When the Prince Cardinal and his court were at Saverne, Mesdemoiselles de Barr were kept perfectly well informed of all the festivities which they did not share. In our little Fareport here, do not the Miss Prys, my neighbours, know what I have for dinner, the amount of my income, the price of my wife's last gown, and the items of my son's, Captain Scapegrace's, tailor's bill? No doubt the Ladies of Barr were equally well informed of the doings of the Prince Coadjutor and his court. Such gambling, such splendour, such painted hussies from Strasbourg, such plays, masquerades, and orgies as took place in that castle! Mesdemoiselles had the very latest particulars of all these horrors, and the Cardinal's castle was to them as the castle of a wicked ogre. From her little dingy tower at night, Madame de Saverne could look out, and see the Cardinal's sixty palace windows all aflame. Of summer nights gusts of unhallowed music would be heard from the great house, where dancing festivals, theatrical pieces even, were performed. Though Madame de Saverne was forbidden by her husband to frequent those assemblies, the townspeople were up to the palace from time to time, and Madame could not help hearing of the doings there. In spite of the count's prohibition, his gardener poached in the Cardinal's woods; one or two of the servants were smuggled in to see a fête or a ball; then Madame's own woman went; then Madame herself began to have a wicked longing to go, as Madame's first ancestress had for the fruit of the forbidden tree. Is not the apple always ripe on that tree, and does not the tempter for ever invite you to pluck and eat? Madame de Saverne had a lively little waiting-maid, whose bright eyes loved to look into neighbours' parks and gardens, and who had found favour with one of the domestics of the Prince Archbishop. This woman brought news to her mistress of the feasts, balls, banquets, nay, comedies, which were performed at the Prince Cardinal's. The Prince's gentlemen went hunting in his uniform. He was served on plate, and a lacquey in his livery stood behind each guest. He had the French comedians over from Strasbourg. Oh, that M. de Molière was a droll gentleman, and how grand the "Cid" was!

Now, to see these plays and balls, Martha, the maid, must have had intelligence in and out of both the houses of Saverne. She must have deceived those old dragons, Mesdemoiselles. She must have had means of creeping out at the gate, and silently creeping back again. She told her mistress everything she saw, acted the plays for her, and described the dresses of the ladies and gentlemen. Madame de Saverne was never tired of hearing her maid's stories. When Martha was going to a fête, Madame lent her some little ornament to wear, and yet when Pasteur Schnorr and Mesdemoiselles talked of the proceedings at Great Saverne, and as if the fires of Gomorrah were ready to swallow up that palace, and all within it, the lady of Saverne sate demurely in silence, and listened to their croaking and sermons. Listened? The pastor exhorted the household, the old ladies talked night after night, and poor Madame de Saverne never

heeded. Her thoughts were away in Great Saverne ; her spirit was for ever hankering about those woods. Letters came now and again from M. de Saverne, with the army. They had been engaged with the enemy. Very good. He was unhurt. Heaven be praised ; and then the grim husband read his poor little wife a grim sermon ; and the grim sisters and the chaplain commented on it. Once, after an action at Calvi, Monsieur de Saverne, who was always specially lively in moments of danger, described how narrowly he had escaped with his life, and the chaplain took advantage of the circumstance, and delivered to the household a prodigious discourse on death, on danger, on preservation here and hereafter, and alas, and alas, poor Madame de Saverne found that she had not listened to a word of the homily. Her thoughts were not with the preacher, nor with the captain of Viomesnil's regiment before Calvi ; they were in the palace at Great Saverne, with the balls, and the comedies, and the music, and the fine gentlemen from Paris and Strasbourg, and out of Empire beyond the Rhine, who frequented the Prince's entertainments.

What happened where the wicked spirit was whispering, "Eat," and the tempting apple hung within reach ? One night when the household was at rest, Madame de Saverne, muffled in cloak and calash, with a female companion similarly disguised, tripped silently out of the back gate of the Hôtel de Saverne, found a carriole in waiting, with a driver who apparently knew the road and the passengers he was to carry, and after half an hour's drive through the straight avenues of the park of Great Saverne, alighted at the gates of the château, where the driver gave up the reins of the carriole to a domestic in waiting, and, by doors and passages which seemed perfectly well known to him, the coachman and the two women entered the castle together, and found their way to a gallery in a great hall, in which many lords and ladies were seated, and at the end of which was a stage, with curtain before it. Men and women came backwards and forwards on this stage, and recited a dialogue in verses. O mercy ! it was a comedy they were acting, one of those wicked delightful plays which she was forbidden to see, and which she was longing to behold ! After the comedy was to be a ball, in which the actors would dance in their stage habits. Some of the people were in masks already, and in that box near to the stage, surrounded by a little crowd of dominoes sate Monseigneur the Prince Cardinal himself. Madame de Saverne had seen him and his cavalcade sometimes returning from hunting. She would have been as much puzzled to say what the play was about as to give an account of Pasteur Schnorr's sermon a few hours before. But Frontin made jokes with his master Damis ; and Géronte locked up the doors of his house, and went to bed grumbling ; and it grew quite dark, and Mathurine flung a rope-ladder out of window, and she and her mistress Elmire came down the ladder ; and Frontin held it, and Elmire, with a little cry, fell into the arms of Mons. Damis ; and master and man, and maid and mistress, sang a merry chorus together, in which human frailty was very cheerfully depicted ; and when they had done, away they went

to the gondola which was in waiting at the canal stairs, and so good night. And when old Géronte, wakened up by the disturbance, at last came forth in his night-cap, and saw the boat paddling away out of reach, you may be sure that the audience laughed at the poor impotent raging old wretch. It was a very merry play indeed, and is still popular and performed in France, and elsewhere.

After the play came a ball. Would Madame dance? Would the noble Countess of Saverne dance with a coachman? There were others below on the dancing-floor dressed in mask and domino as she was. Who ever said she had a mask and domino? You see it has been stated that she was muffled in cloak and calash. Well, is not a domino a cloak? and has it not a hood or *crash* appended to it? and, pray, do not women wear masks at home as well as the Ridotto?

Another question arises here. A high-born lady entrusts herself to a charioteer, who drives her to the castle of a prince her husband's enemy. Who was her companion? Of course he could be no other than that luckless Monsieur de la Motte. He had never been very far away from Madame de Saverne since her husband's departure. In spite of chaplains, and duennas, and guards, and locks and keys, he had found means of communicating with her. How? By what lies and stratagems? By what arts and bribery? These poor people are both gone to their account. Both suffered a fearful punishment. I will not describe their follies, and don't care to be Mons. Figaro, and hold the ladder and lantern, while the count scales Rosina's window. Poor, frightened, erring soul! She suffered an awful penalty for what, no doubt, was a great wrong.

A child almost, she was married to M. de Saverne, without knowing him, without liking him, because her parents ordered her, and because she was bound to comply with their will. She was sold, and went to her slavery. She lived at first obediently enough. If she shed tears, they were dried; if she quarrelled with her husband, the two were presently reconciled. She bore no especial malice, and was as gentle, subordinate a slave as ever you shall see in Jamaica or Barbadoes. Nobody's tears were sooner dried, as I should judge: none would be more ready to kiss the hand of the overseer who drove her. But you don't expect sincerity and subservience too. I know, for my part, a lady who only obeys when she likes: and faith! it may be it is *I* who am the hypocrite, and have to tremble, and smile, and swindle before *her*.

When Madame de Saverne's time was nearly come, it was ordered that she should go to Strasbourg, where the best medical assistance is to be had: and here, six months after her husband's departure for Corsica, their child, Agnes de Saverne, was born.

Did secret terror and mental disquietude and remorse now fall on the unhappy lady? She wrote to my mother, at this time her only confidante (and yet not a confidante of all!)—“O Ursule! I dread this event. Perhaps I shall die. I think I hope I shall. In these long days, since he has been away, I have got so to dread his return, that I believe I shall go

mad when I see him. Do you know, after the battle before Calvi, when I read that many officers had been killed, I thought, is M. de Saverne killed? And I read the list down, and his name was not there: and, my sister, my sister, I was not glad! Have I come to be such a monster as to wish my own husband . . . No. I wish I was. I can't speak to M. Schnorr about this. He is so stupid. He doesn't understand me. He is like my husband; for ever preaching me his sermons.

"Listen, Ursule! Speak it to nobody! I have been to hear a sermon. Oh, it was indeed divine! It was not from one of our pastors. Oh, how they weary me! It was from a good bishop of the *French* Church—not our *German* Church—the Bishop of Amiens—who happens to be here on a visit to the Cardinal Prince. The bishop's name is *M. de la Motte*. He is a relative of a gentleman of whom we have seen a great deal lately—of a great friend of M. de Saverne, *who saved my husband's life* in the battle M. de S. is always talking about.

"How beautiful the cathedral is! It was night when I went. The church was lighted like the stars, and the music was like *Heaven*. Ah, how different from M. Schnorr at home, from—from somebody else at my new home who is *always* preaching—that is, when he is at home! Poor man! I wonder whether he preaches to them in Corsica! I pity them if he does. Don't mention the cathedral if you write to me. The dragons don't know anything about it. How they would scold if they did! Oh, how they ennyent me, the dragons! Behold them! They think I am writing to my husband. Ah, Ursule! When I write to him, I sit for hours before the paper. I say nothing; and what I say seems to be lies. Whereas when I write to you, my pen runs—runs! The paper is covered before I think I have begun. So it is when I write to . . . I do believe that *vilain dragon* is peering at my note with her spectacles! Yes, my good sister, I am writing to M. le Comte!"

To this letter a postscript is added, as by the countess's command, in the German language, in which Madame de Saverne's medical attendant announces the birth of a daughter, and that the child and mother are doing well.

That daughter is sitting before me now—with spectacles on nose too—very placidly spelling the Portsmouth paper, where I hope she will soon read the promotion of Monsieur Scapegrace, her son. She has exchanged her noble name for mine, which is only humble and honest. My dear! your eyes are not so bright as once I remember them, and the raven locks are streaked with silver. To shield thy head from dangers has been the blessed chance and duty of my life. When I turn towards her, and see her moored in our harbour of rest, after our life's chequered voyage, calm and happy, a sense of immense gratitude fills my being, and my heart says a hymn of praise.

The first days of the life of Agnes de Saverne were marked by incidents which were strangely to influence her career. Around her little cradle a double, a triple tragedy was about to be enacted. Strange that

death, crime, revenge, remorse, mystery, should attend round the cradle of one so innocent and pure—as pure and innocent, I pray Heaven, now, as upon that day when, at scarce a month old, the adventures of her life began.

That letter to my mother, written by Madame de Saverne on the eve of her child's birth, and finished by her attendant, bears date November 25, 1768. A month later Martha Seebach, her attendant, wrote (in German) that her mistress had suffered frightfully from fever; so much so that her reason left her for some time, and her life was despaired of. Mesdemoiselles de Barr were for bringing up the child by hand; but not being versed in nursery practices, the infant had ailed sadly until restored to its mother. Madame de Saverne was now tranquil. Madame was greatly better. She had suffered most fearfully. In her illness she was constantly calling for her foster-sister to protect her from some danger which, as she appeared to fancy, menaced Madame.

Child as I was at the time when these letters were passing, I remember the arrival of the next. It lies in yonder drawer, and was written by a poor fevered hand which is now cold, in ink which is faded after fifty years.* I remember my mother screaming out in German, which she always spoke when strongly moved, “Dear Heaven, my child is mad—is mad!” And indeed that poor faded letter contains a strange rhapsody.

“Ursule!” she wrote (I do not care to give at length the words of the poor wandering creature), “after my child was born the demons wanted to take her from me. But I struggled and kept her quite close, and now they can no longer hurt her. I took her to church. Martha went with me, and He was there—he always is—to defend me from the demons, and I had her christened Agnes, and I was christened Agnes too. Think of my being christened at twenty-two! Agnes the First, and Agnes the Second. But though my name is changed, I am always the same to my Ursule, and my name now is, Agnes Clarisse de Saverne, born de Viomesnil.”

She had actually, when not quite mistress of her own reason, been baptized into the Roman Catholic Church with her child. Was she sane, when she so acted? Had she thought of the step before taking it? Had she known Catholic clergymen at Saverne, or had she other reasons for her conversion than those which were furnished in the conversations which took place between her husband and M. de la Motte? In this letter the poor lady says, “Yesterday two persons came to my bed with gold crowns round their heads. One was dressed like a priest; one was beautiful, and covered with arrows, and they said, ‘We are Saint Fabian and Saint Sebastian; and to-morrow is the day of Saint Agnes: and she will be at church to receive you there.’”

* The memoirs appear to have been written in the years '20, '21. Mr. Duval was gazetted Rear-Admiral and K.C.B. in the promotions on the accession of King George IV.

What the real case was I never knew. The Protestant clergyman whom I saw in after days could only bring his book to show that he had christened the infant, not Agnes, but Augustine. Martha Seebach is dead. Lamotte, when I conversed with him, did not touch upon this part of the poor lady's history. I conjecture that the images and pictures which she had seen in the churches operated upon her fevered brain; that, having procured a Roman Calendar and Missal, she knew saints' days and feasts; and, not yet recovered from her delirium or quite responsible for the actions which she performed, she took her child to the cathedral, and was baptized there.

And now, no doubt, the poor lady had to practise more deceit and concealment. The "demons" were the old maiden sisters left to watch over her. She had to hoodwink these. Had she not done so before—when she went to the Cardinal's palace at Saverne? Wherever the poor thing moved I fancy those ill-omened eyes of Lamotte glimmering upon her out of the darkness. Poor Eve,—not lost quite, I pray and think,—but that serpent was ever trailing after her, and she was to die poisoned in its coil. Who shall understand the awful ways of fate? A year after that period regarding which I write, a lovely Imperial Princess rode through the Strasbourg streets radiant and blushing, amidst pealing bells, roaring cannon, garlands and banners, and shouting multitudes. Did any one ever think that the last stage of that life's journey was to be taken in a hideous tumbrel, and to terminate on a scaffold? The life of Madame de Saverne was to last but a year more; and her end to be scarcely less tragical.

Many physicians have told me how often after the birth of a child the brain of the mother will be affected. Madame de Saverne remained for some time in this febrile condition, if not unconscious of her actions, at least not accountable for all of them. At the end of three months she woke up as out of a dream, having a dreadful recollection of the circumstances which had passed. Under what hallucinations we never shall know, or yielding to what persuasions, the wife of a stern Protestant nobleman had been to a Roman Catholic church, and had been christened there with her child. She never could recall that step. A great terror came over her as she thought of it—a great terror and a hatred of her husband, the cause of all her grief and her fear. She began to look out lest he should return; she clutched her child to her breast, and barred and bolted all doors for fear people should rob her of the infant. The Protestant chaplain, the Protestant sisters-in-law looked on with dismay and anxiety; they thought justly that Madame de Saverne was not yet quite restored to her reason; they consulted the physicians, who agreed with them; who arrived, who prescribed; who were treated by the patient with scorn, laughter, insult sometimes; sometimes with tears and terror, according to her wayward mood. Her condition was most puzzling. The sisters wrote from time to time guarded reports respecting her to her husband in Corsica. He, for his part, replied instantly with volumes of

his wonted verbose commonplace. He acquiesced in the decrees of Fate, when informed that a daughter was born to him; and presently wrote whole reams of instructions regarding her nurture, dress, and physical and religious training. The child was called Agnes? He would have preferred Barbara, as being his mother's name. I remember in some of the poor gentleman's letters there were orders about the child's pap, and instructions as to the nurse's diet. He was coming home soon. The Corsicans had been defeated in every action. Had he been a Catholic he would have been a knight of the King's orders long ere this. M. de Viomesnil hoped still to get for him the order of Military Merit (the Protestant order which his Majesty had founded ten years previously). These letters (which were subsequently lost by an accident at sea*) spoke modestly enough of the count's personal adventures. I hold him to have been a very brave man, and only not tedious and prolix when he spoke of his own merits and services.

The count's letters succeeded each other post after post. The end of the war was approaching, and with it his return was assured. He exulted in the thought of seeing his child, and leading her in the way she should go—the right way, the true way. As the mother's brain cleared, her terror grew greater—her terror and loathing of her husband. She could not bear the thought of his return, or to face him with the confession which she knew she must make. His wife turn Catholic and baptize his child? She felt he would kill her, did he know what had happened. She went to the priest who had baptized her. M. Georgel (his Eminence's secretary) knew her husband. The Prince Cardinal was so great and powerful a prelate, Georgel said, that he would protect her against all the wrath of all the Protestants in France. I think she must have had interviews with the Prince Cardinal, though there is no account of them in any letter to my mother.

The campaign was at an end. M. de Vaux, M. de Viomesnil, both wrote in highly eulogistic terms of the conduct of the Count de Saverne. Their good wishes would attend him home Protestant as he was, their best interest should be exerted in his behalf.

The day of the count's return approached. The day arrived: I can fancy the brave gentleman with beating heart ascending the steps of the homely lodging where his family have been living at Strasbourg ever since the infant's birth. How he has dreamt about that child: prayed for her and his wife at night-watch and bivouac—prayed for them as he stood, calm and devout, in the midst of battle. . . .

When he enters the room, he sees only two frightened domestics and the two ghastly faces of his scared old sisters.

"Where are Clarisse and the child?" he asks.

The child and the mother were gone. The aunts knew not where.

* The letters from *Madame de Saverne* to my mother at Winchelsea were not subject to this mishap, but were always kept by Madame Duval in her own escritoire.

A stroke of palsy could scarcely have smitten the unhappy gentleman more severely than did the news which his trembling family was obliged to give him. In later days I saw M. Schnorr, the German pastor from Kehl, who has been mentioned already, and who was installed in the count's house as tutor and chaplain during the absence of the master. "When Madame de Saverne went to make her *coucher* at Strasburg" (M. Schnorr said to me), "I retired to my duties at Kehl, glad enough to return to the quiet of my home, for the noble lady's reception of me was anything but gracious; and I had to endure much female sarcasm and many unkind words from Madame la Comtesse, whenever, as in duty bound, I presented myself at her table. Sir, that most unhappy lady used to make sport of me before her domestics. She used to call me her gaoler. She used to mimic my ways of eating and drinking. She would yawn in the midst of my exhortations, and cry out, 'O que c'est bête!' and when I gave out a Psalm, would utter little cries, and say, 'Pardon me, M. Schnorr, but you sing so out of tune you make my head ache;' so that I could scarcely continue that portion of the service, the very domestics laughing at me when I began to sing. My life was a martyrdom, but I bore my tortures meekly, out of a sense of duty and my love for M. le Comte. When her ladyship kept her chamber I used to wait almost daily upon Mesdemoiselles the count's sisters, to ask news of her and her child. I christened the infant; but her mother was too ill to be present, and sent me out word by Mademoiselle Marthe that *she* should call the child Agnes, though I might name it what I please. This was on the 21st January, and I remember being struck, because in the Roman Calendar the feast of St. Agnes is celebrated on that day.

"Haggard and actually grown grey, from a black man which he was, my poor lord came to me with wildness and agony of grief in all his features and actions, to announce to me that Madame the Countess had fled, taking her infant with her. And he had a scrap of paper with him, over which he wept and raged as one demented; now pouring out fiercer imprecations, now bursting into passionate tears and cries, calling upon his wife, his darling, his prodigal, to come back, to bring him his child, when all should be forgiven. As he thus spoke his screams and groans were so piteous, that I myself was quite unmanned, and my mother, who keeps house for me (and who happened to be listening at the door), was likewise greatly alarmed by my poor lord's passion of grief. And when I read on that paper that my lady countess had left the faith to which our fathers gloriously testified in the midst of trouble, slaughter, persecution, and bondage, I was scarcely less shocked than my good lord himself.

"We crossed the bridge to Strasbourg back again and went to the Cathedral Church, and entering there, we saw the Abbé Georgel coming out of a chapel where he had been to perform his devotions. The Abbé, who knew me, gave a ghastly smile as he recognized me, and for a pale man, his cheek blushed up a little when I said, 'This is Monsieur the Comte de Saverne.'

"Where is she?" asked my poor lord, clutching the Abbé's arm.

"Who?" asks the Abbé, stepping back a little.

"Where is my child? where is my wife?" cries the count.

"Silence, Monsieur!" says the Abbé. "Do you know in whose house you are?" and the chant from the altar, where the service was being performed, came upon us, and smote my poor lord as though a shot had struck him. We were standing, he tottering against a pillar in the nave, close by the christening font, and over my lord's head was a picture of Saint Agnes.

"The agony of the poor gentleman could not but touch any one who witnessed it. 'M. le Comte,' says the Abbé, 'I feel for you. This great surprise has come upon you unprepared—I—I pray that it may be for your good.'

"You know, then, what has happened?" asked M. de Saverne; and the Abbé was obliged to stammer a confession that he *did* know what had occurred. He was, in fact, the very man who had performed the rite which separated my unhappy lady from the church of her fathers.

"Sir," he said, with some spirit, "this was a service which no clergyman could refuse. I would to Heaven, Monsieur, that you, too, might be brought to ask it from me."

The poor count, with despair in his face, asked to see the register which confirmed the news, and there we saw that on the 21st January, 1769, being the Feast of St. Agnes, the noble lady, Clarisse, Countess of Saverne, born de Viomesnil, aged twenty-two years, and Agnes, only daughter of the same Count of Saverne and Clarisse his wife, were baptized and received into the Church in the presence of two witnesses (clerics) whose names were signed.

The poor count knelt over the registry book with an awful grief in his face, and in a mood which I heartily pitied. He bent down, uttering what seemed an imprecation rather than a prayer, and at this moment it chanced the service at the chief altar was concluded, and Monseigneur and his suite of clergy came into the sacristy. Sir, the Count de Saverne, starting up, clutching his sword in his hand, and shaking his fist at the Cardinal, uttered a wild speech calling down imprecations upon the church of which the prince was a chief: 'Where is my lamb that you have taken from me?' he said, using the language of the Prophet towards the King who had despoiled him.

The Cardinal haughtily said the conversion of Madame de Saverne was of Heaven, and no act of his, and, adding, "Bad neighbour as you have been to me, sir, I wish you so well that I hope you may follow her."

At this the count, losing all patience, made a violent attack upon the Church of Rome, denounced the Cardinal, and called down maledictions upon his head; said that a day should come when his abominable pride should meet with a punishment and fall; and spoke, as, in fact, the poor gentleman was able to do only too readily and volubly, against Rome and all its errors.

"The Prince Louis de Rohan replied with no little dignity, as I own. He said that such words in such a place were offensive and out of all reason : that it only depended on him to have M. de Saverne arrested, and punished for blasphemy and insult to the Church: but that, pitying the count's unhappy condition, the Cardinal would forget the hasty and insolent words he had uttered—as he would know how to defend Madame de Saverne and her child after the righteous step which she had taken. And he swept out of the sacristy with his suite, and passed through the door which leads into his palace, leaving my poor count still in his despair and fury.

"As he spoke with those Scripture phrases which M. de Saverne ever had at command, I remember how the Prince Cardinal tossed up his head and smiled. I wonder whether he thought of the words when his own day of disgrace came, and the fatal affair of the diamond necklace which brought him to ruin."^{*}

"Not without difficulty" (M. Schnorr resumed) "I induced the poor count to quit the church where his wife's apostasy had been performed. The outer gates and walls are decorated with numberless sculptures of saints of the Roman Calendar: and for a minute or two the poor man stood on the threshold shouting imprecations in the sunshine, and calling down woe upon France and Rome. I hurried him away. Such language was dangerous, and could bring no good to either of us. He was almost a madman when I conducted him back to his home, where the ladies his sisters, scared with his wild looks, besought me not to leave him.

"Again he went into the room which his wife and child had inhabited, and, as he looked at the relics of both which still were left there, gave way to bursts of grief which were pitiable indeed to witness. I speak of what happened near forty years ago, and remember the scene as though yesterday : the passionate agony of the poor gentleman, the sobs and prayers. On a chest of drawers there was a little cap belonging to the infant. He seized it : kissed it : wept over it : calling upon the mother to bring the child back and he would forgive all. He thrust the little cap into his breast : opened every drawer, book, and closet, seeking for some indications of the fugitives. My opinion was, and that even of the ladies, sisters of M. le Comte, that Madame had taken refuge in a convent with the child, that the Cardinal knew where she was, poor and friendless, and that the Protestant gentleman would in vain seek for her. Perhaps when tired of that place—I for my part thought Madame la Comtesse a light-minded, wilful person, who certainly had no *vocation*, as the Catholics call it, for a religious life—thought she might come out after a while, and gave my patron such consolation, as I could devise, upon this faint hope. He who was all forgiveness at one minute, was all wrath at the next. He would

* My informant, Protestant though he was, did not, as I remember, speak with very much asperity against the Prince Cardinal. He said that the prince lived an edifying life after his fall, succouring the poor, and doing everything in his power to defend the cause of royalty.—D. D.

rather see his child dead than receive her as a Catholic. He would go to the King, surrounded by harlots as he was, and ask for justice. There were still Protestant gentlemen left in France, whose spirit was not altogether trodden down, and they would back him in demanding reparation for this outrage.

"I had some vague suspicion, which, however, I dismissed from my mind as unworthy, that there might be a third party cognizant of Madame's flight; and this was a gentleman, once a great favourite of M. le Comte, and in whom I myself was not a little interested. Three or four days after the Comte de Saverne went away to the war, as I was meditating on a sermon which I proposed to deliver, walking at the back of my lord's house of Saverne, in the fields which skirt the wood where the Prince Cardinal's great Schloss stands, I saw this gentleman with a gun over his shoulder, and recognized him—the Chevalier de la Motte, the very person who had saved the life of M. de Saverne in the campaign against the English.

"M. de la Motte said he was staying with the Cardinal, and trusted that the ladies of Saverne were well. He sent his respectful compliments to them: in a laughing way said he had been denied the door when he came to a visit, which he thought was an unkind act towards an old comrade: and at the same time expressed his sorrow at the count's departure—'for, Herr Pfarrer,' said he, 'you know I am a good Catholic, and in many most important conversations which I had with the Comte de Saverne, the differences between our two churches was the subject of our talk, and I do think I should have converted him to ours.' I, humble village pastor as I am, was not afraid to speak in such a cause, and we straightway had a most interesting conversation together, in which, as the gentleman showed, I had not the worst of the argument. It appeared he had been educated for the Roman Church, but afterwards entered the army. He was a most interesting man, and his name was le Chevalier de la Motte. You look as if you had known him, M. le Capitaine—will it please you to replenish your pipe, and take another glass of my beer?"

I said I had *effectivement* known M. de la Motte; and the good old clergyman (with many compliments to me for speaking French and German so glibly) proceeded with his artless narrative. "I was ever a poor horseman: and when I came to be chaplain and major-domo at the Hôtel de Saverne, in the count's absence, Madame more than once rode entirely away from me, saying that she could not afford to go at my clerical jog-trot. And being in a scarlet amazon, and a conspicuous object, you see, I thought I saw her at a distance talking to a gentleman on a schimmel horse, in a grass-green coat. When I asked her to whom she spoke, she said, 'M. le Pasteur, you radotez with your grey horse and your green coat! If you are set to be a spy over me, ride faster, or bring out the old ladies to bark at your side.' The fact is, the countess was for ever quarrelling with those old ladies, and they were a yelping ill-natured pair. They treated me, a pastor of the Reformed Church of the Augsburg

Confession, as no better than a lacquey, sir, and made me eat the bread of humiliation; whereas Madame la Comtesse, though often haughty, flighty, and passionate, could also be so winning and gentle, that no one could resist her. Ah, sir!" said the pastor, "that woman had a coaxing way with her when she chose, and when her flight came I was in such a way that the jealous old sisters-in-law said I was in love with her myself. Pfui! For a month before my lord's arrival I had been knocking at all doors to see if I could find my poor wandering lady behind them. She, her child, and Martha her maid, were gone, and we knew not whither.

"On that very first day of his unhappy arrival, M. le Comte discovered what his sisters, jealous and curious as they were, what I, a man of no inconsiderable acumen, had failed to note. Amongst torn papers and chiffons, in her ladyship's bureau, there was a scrap with one line in her handwriting. '*Ursule, Ursule, le tyran rev...!*' and no more.

"Ah! M. le Comte said, 'She is gone to her foster-sister in England! Quick, quick, horses!' And before two hours were passed he was on horseback, making the first stage of that long journey."

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAVELLERS.

THE poor gentleman was in such haste that the old proverb was realized in his case, and his journey was anything but speedy. At Nanci he fell ill of a fever, which had nearly carried him off, and in which he unceasingly raved about his child, and called upon his faithless wife to return her. Almost before he was convalescent, he was on his way again, to Boulogne, where he saw that English coast on which he rightly conjectured his fugitive wife was sheltered.

And here, from my boyish remembrance, which, respecting these early days, remains extraordinarily clear, I can take up the story, in which I was myself a very young actor, playing in the strange, fantastic, often terrible, drama which ensued a not insignificant part. As I survey it now, the curtain is down, and the play long over; as I think of its surprises, disguises, mysteries, escapes, and dangers, I am amazed myself, and sometimes inclined to be almost as great a fatalist as M. de la Motte, who vowed that a superior Power ruled our actions for us, and declared that he could no more prevent his destiny from accomplishing itself, than he could prevent his hair from growing. What a destiny it was! What a fatal tragedy was now about to begin!

One evening in our Midsummer holidays, in the year 1769, I remember being seated in my little chair at home, with a tempest of rain beating down the street. We had customers on most evenings, but there happened to be none on this night: and I remember I was puzzling over a bit of

Latin grammar, to which mother used to keep me stoutly when I came home from school.

It is fifty years since.* I have forgotten who knows how many events of my life, which are not much worth the remembering; but I have as clearly before my eyes now a little scene which occurred on this momentous night, as though it had been acted within this hour. As we are sitting at our various employments, we hear steps coming up the street, which was empty, and silent but for the noise of the wind and rain. We hear steps—several steps—along the pavement, and they stop at our door.

"Madame Duval. It is Gregson!" cries a voice from without.

"Ah, bon Dieu!" says mother, starting up and turning quite white. And then I heard the cry of an infant. Dear heart! How well I remember that little cry!

As the door opens, a great gust of wind sets our two candles flickering, and I see enter.

A gentleman giving his arm to a lady who is veiled in cloaks and wraps, an attendant carrying a crying child, and Gregson the boatman after them.

My mother gives a great hoarse shriek, and crying out, "Clarisse! Clarisse!" rushes up to the lady, and hugs and embraces her passionately. The child cries and wails. The nurse strives to soothe the infant. The gentleman takes off his hat and wrings the wet from it, and looks at me. It was then I felt a strange shock and terror. I have felt the same shock once or twice in my life: and once, notably, the person so affecting me has been my enemy, and has come to a dismal end.

"We have had a very rough voyage," says the gentleman (in French) to my grandfather. "We have been fourteen hours at sea. Madame has suffered greatly, and is much exhausted."

"Thy rooms are ready," says mother, fondly. "My poor Biche, thou shalt sleep in comfort to-night, and need fear nothing, nothing!"

A few days before I had seen mother and her servant mightily busy in preparing the rooms on the first floor, and decorating them. When I asked whom she was expecting, she boxed my ears, and bade me be quiet; but these were evidently the expected visitors; and, of course, from the names which mother used, I knew that the lady was the Countess of Saverne.

"And this is thy son, Ursule?" says the lady. "He is a great boy! My little wretch is always crying."

"Oh, the little darling," says mother, seizing the child, which fell to crying louder than ever, "scared by the nodding plume and bristling crest" of Madame Duval, who wore a great cap in those days, and indeed looked as fierce as any Hector.

When the pale lady spoke so harshly about the child, I remember myself feeling a sort of surprise and displeasure. Indeed, I have loved

* The narrative seems to have been written about the year 1820.

children all my life, and am a fool about them (as witness my treatment of my own rascal), and no one can say that I was ever a tyrant at school, or ever fought there except to hold my own.

My mother produced what food was in the house, and welcomed her guests to her humble table. What trivial things remain impressed on the memory ! I remember laughing in my boyish way because the lady said, "*Ah ! c'est ça du thé ? je n'en ai jamais goûté. Mais c'est très mauvais, n'est ce pas, M. le Chevalier ?*" I suppose they had not learned to drink tea in Alsace yet. Mother stopped my laughing with her usual appeal to my ears. I was daily receiving that sort of correction from the good soul. Grandfather said, if Madame the Countess would like a little tass of real Nants brandy after her voyage, he could supply her ; but she would have none of that either, and retired soon to her chamber, which had been prepared for her with my mother's best sheets and diapers, and in which was a bed for her maid Martha, who had retired to it with the little crying child. For M. le Chevalier de la Motte an apartment was taken at Mr. Billis's the baker's, down the street :—a friend who gave me many a plum-cake in my childhood, and whose wigs grandfather dressed, if you must know the truth.

At morning and evening we used to have prayers, which grandfather spoke with much eloquence ; but on this night, as he took out his great Bible, and was for having me read a chapter, my mother said, "No. This poor Clarisse is fatigued, and will go to bed." And to bed accordingly the stranger went. And as I read my little chapter, I remember how tears fell down mother's cheeks, and how she cried, "Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu ! ayez pitié d'elle," and when I was going to sing our evening hymn, "Nun ruhen alle Wälder," she told me to hush. Madame upstairs was tired, and wanted to sleep. And she went upstairs to look after Madame, and bade me be a little guide to the strange gentleman, and show him the way to Billis's house. Off I went, prattling by his side ; I dare-say I soon forgot the terror which I felt when I first saw him. You may be sure all Winchelsea knew that a French lady, and her child, and her maid, were come to stay with Madame Duval, and a French gentleman to lodge over the baker's.

I never shall forget my terror and astonishment when mother told me that this lady who came to us was a Papist. There were two gentlemen of that religion living in our town, at a handsome house called the Priory ; but they had little to do with persons in my parents' humble walk of life, though of course my mother would dress Mrs. Weston's head as well as any other lady's. I forgot also to say that Mrs. Duval went out sometimes as ladies' nurse, and in that capacity had attended Mrs. Weston, who, however, lost her child. The Westons had a chapel in their house, in the old grounds of the Priory, and clergymen of their persuasion used to come over from my Lord Newburgh's of Slindon, or from Arundel, where there is another great Papist house ; and one or two Roman Catholics—there were very few of them in our town—were buried

in a part of the old gardens of the Priory, where a monks' burying-place had been before Harry VIII.'s time.

The new gentleman was the first Papist to whom I had ever spoken ; and as I trotted about the town with him, showing him the old gates, the church, and so forth, I remember saying to him, " And have you burned any Protestants ? "

" Oh, yes ! " says he, giving a horrible grin, " I have roasted several, and eaten them afterwards." And I shrank back from him, and his pale grinning face ; feeling once more that terror which had come over me when I first beheld him. He was a queer gentleman ; he was amused by my simplicity and odd sayings. He was never tired of having me with him. He said I should be his little English master ; and indeed he learned the language surprisingly quick, whereas poor Madame de Saverne never understood a word of it.

She was very ill—pale, with a red spot on either cheek, sitting for whole hours in silence, and looking round frightened, as if a prey to some terror. I have seen my mother watching her, and looking almost as scared as the countess herself. At times, Madame could not bear the crying of the child, and would order it away from her. At other times, she would clutch it, cover it with cloaks, and lock her door, and herself into the chamber with her infant. She used to walk about the house of a night. I had a little room near mother's, which I occupied during the holidays, and on Saturdays and Sundays, when I came over from Rye. I remember quite well waking up one night, and hearing Madame's voice at mother's door, crying out, " Ursula, Ursula ! quick ! horses ! I must go away. He is coming ; I know he is coming ! " And then there were remonstrances on mother's part, and Madame's maid came out of her room, with entreaties to her mistress to return. At the cry of the child, the poor mother would rush away from whatever place she was in, and hurry to the infant. Not that she loved it. At the next moment she would cast the child down on the bed, and go to the window again, and look to the sea. For hours she sat at that window, with a curtain twisted round her, as if hiding from some one. Ah ! how have I looked up at that window since, and the light twinkling there ! I wonder does the house remain yet ? I don't like now to think of the passionate grief I have passed through, as I looked up to yon glimmering lattice.

It was evident our poor visitor was in a deplorable condition. The apothecary used to come and shake his head, and order medicine. The medicine did little good. The sleeplessness continued. She was a prey to constant fever. She would make incoherent answers to questions put to her; laugh and weep at odd times and places ; push her meals away from her, though they were the best my poor mother could supply ; order my grandfather to go and sit in the kitchen, and not have the impudence to sit down before her ; coax and scold my mother by turns, and take her up very sharply when she rebuked me. Poor Madame Duval was scared by her foster-sister. She, who ruled everybody, became humble

before the poor crazy lady. I can see them both now, the lady in white, listless and silent as she would sit for hours taking notice of no one, and mother watching her with terrified dark eyes.

The Chevalier de la Motte had his lodgings, and came and went between his house and ours. I thought he was the lady's cousin. He used to call himself her cousin; I did not know what our pastor M. Borel meant when he came to mother one day, and said, "Fi, done, what a pretty business thou hast commenced, Madame Denis—thou an elder's daughter of our Church!"

"What business?" says mother.

"That of harbouring crime and sheltering iniquity," says he, naming the crime, viz. No. vii. of the Decalogue.

Being a child, I did not then understand the word he used. But as soon as he had spoken, mother, taking up a saucepan of soup, cries out, "Get out of there, Monsieur, all pastor as you are, or I will send this soup at thy ugly head, and the saucepan afterwards." And she looked so fierce, that I am not surprised the little man trotted off.

Shortly afterwards grandfather comes home, looking almost as frightened as his commanding officer, M. Borel. Grandfather expostulated with his daughter-in-law. He was in a great agitation. He wondered how she could speak so to the pastor of the Church. "All the town," says he, "is talking about you and this unhappy lady."

"All the town is an old woman," replies Madame Duval, stamping her foot and *twisting her moustache*, I might say, almost. "What? These white-beaks of French cry out because I receive my foster-sister? What? It is wrong to shelter a poor foolish dying woman? Oh, the cowards, the cowards! Listen, petit-papa; if you hear a word said at the club against your *bru*, and do not knock the man down, I will." And, faith, I think grandfather's *bru* would have kept her word.

I fear my own unlucky simplicity brought part of the opprobrium down upon my poor mother, which she had now to suffer in our French colony; for one day a neighbour, Madame Crochu by name, stepping in and asking, "How is your boarder, and how is her cousin the count?"

"Madame Clarisse is no better than before," said I (shaking my head wisely), "and the gentleman is not a count, and he is not her cousin, Madame Crochu!"

"Oh, he is no relation?" says the mantua-maker. And that story was quickly told over the little town, and when we went to church next Sunday, M. Borel preached a sermon which made all the congregation look to us, and poor mother sate boiling red like a lobster fresh out of the pot. I did not quite know what I had done: I know what mother was giving me for my pains, when our poor patient, entering the room, hearing, I suppose, the hissing of the stick (and never word from me, I used to bite a bullet, and hold my tongue), rushed into the room, whisked the cane out of mother's hand, flung her to the other end of the room with a strength quite surprising, and clasped me up in her arms and began pacing

up and down the room, and glaring at mother. "Strike your own child, monster, monster!" says the poor lady. "Kneel down and ask pardon: or, as sure as I am the queen, I will order your head off!"

At dinner, she ordered me to come and sit by her. "Bishop!" she said to grandfather, "my lady of honour has been naughty. She whipt the little prince with a scorpion. I took it from her hand. Duke! if she does it again: there is a sword, I desire you to cut the countess's head off!" And then she took a carving knife and waved it, and gave one of her laughs, which always set poor mother a-crying. She used to call us dukes and princes—I don't know what—poor soul. It was the Chevalier de la Motte, whom she generally styled duke, holding out her hand, and saying, "Kneel, sir, kneel, and kiss our royal hand." And M. de la Motte would kneel with a sad, sad face, and go through this hapless ceremony. As for grandfather, who was very bald, and without his wig, being one evening below her window culling a salad in his garden, she beckoned him to her smiling, and when the poor old man came, she upset a dish of tea over his bald pate, and said, "I appoint you and anoint you Bishop of St. Denis!"

The woman Martha, who had been the companion of the Countess de Saverne in her unfortunate flight from home—I believe that since the birth of her child the poor lady had never been in her right senses at all—broke down under the ceaseless watching and care her mistress's condition necessitated, and I have no doubt found her duties yet more painful and difficult when a second mistress, and a very harsh, imperious, and jealous one, was set over her in the person of worthy Madame Duval. My mother was for ordering everybody who would submit to her orders, and entirely managing the affairs of all those whom she loved. She put the mother to bed, and the baby in her cradle; she prepared food for both of them, dressed one and the other with an equal affection, and loved that unconscious mother and child with a passionate devotion. But she loved her own way, was jealous of all who came between her and the objects of her love, and no doubt led her subordinates an uncomfortable life.

Three months of Madame Duval tired out the countess's Alsatian maid, Martha. She revolted and said she would go home. Mother said she was an ungrateful wretch, but was delighted to get rid of her. She always averred the woman stole articles of dress, and trinkets, and laces, belonging to her mistress, before she left us: and in an evil hour this wretched Marthe went away. I believed she really loved her mistress, and would have loved the child, had my mother's rigid arms not pushed her from its cot. Poor little innocent, in what tragic gloom did thy life begin! But an unseen Power was guarding that helpless innocence: and sure a good angel watched it in its hour of danger!

So Madame Duval turned Martha out of her tent as Sarah thrust out Hagar. Are women pleased after doing these pretty tricks? Your ladyships know best. Madame D. not only thrust out Martha, but flung stones after Martha all her life. She went away, not blameless perhap-

but wounded to the quick with ingratitude which had been shown to her, and a link in that mysterious chain of destiny which was binding *all* these people—me the boy of seven years old; yonder little speechless infant of as many months; that poor wandering lady bereft of reason; that dark inscrutable companion of hers who brought evil with him wherever he came.

From Dungeness to Boulogne is but six-and-thirty miles, and our boats, when war was over, were constantly making journeys there. Even in war-time the little harmless craft left each other alone, and, I suspect, carried on a great deal of peaceable and fraudulent trade together. Grand-father had share of a “fishing” boat with one Thomas Gregson of Lydd. When Marthe was determined to go, one of our boats was ready to take her to the place from whence she came, or transfer her to a French boat, which would return into its own harbour.* She was carried back to Boulogne and landed. I know the day full well from a document now before me, of which the dismal writing and signing were occasioned by that very landing.

As she stepped out from the pier (a crowd of people, no doubt, tearing the poor wretch's slender luggage from her to carry it to the *Customs*) almost the first person on whom the woman's eyes fell was her master the Count de Saverne. He had actually only reached the place on that very day, and walked the pier, looking towards England, as many a man has done from the same spot, when he saw the servant of his own wife come up the side of the pier.

He rushed to her, as she started back screaming and almost fainting, but the crowd of beggars behind her prevented her retreat. “The child, does the child live?” asked the poor count, in the German tongue which both spoke.

The child was well. Thank God, thank God! The poor father's heart was freed from *that* terror, then! I can fancy the gentleman saying, “Your mistress is at Winchelsea, with her foster-sister?”

“Yes, M. le Comte.”

“The Chevalier de la Motte is always at Winchelsea?”

“Ye—oh, no, no, M. le Comte!”

“Silence, liar! He made the journey with her. They stopt at the same inns. M. le Brun, merchant, aged 34; his sister, Madame Dubois, aged 24, with a female infant in arms, and a maid, left this port, on 20th April, in the English fishing-boat *Mary*, of Rye. Before embarking they slept at the *Écu de France*. I knew I should find them.”

“By all that is sacred, I never left Madame once during the voyage!”

“Never till to-day? Enough. How was the fishing-boat called which brought you to Boulogne?”

One of the boat's crew was actually walking behind the unhappy

* There were points for which our boats used to make, and meet the French boats when not disturbed, and do a great deal more business than I could then understand.—D. D.

gentleman at the time, with some packet which Ursule had left in it.* It seemed as if fate was determined upon suddenly and swiftly bringing the criminal to justice, and under the avenging sword of the friend he had betrayed. He bade the man follow him to the hotel. There should be a good drink-money for him.

"Does he treat her well?" asked the poor gentleman, as he and the maid walked on.

"Dame! No mother can be more gentle than he is with her!" Where Marthe erred was in not saying that her mistress was utterly deprived of reason, and had been so almost since the child's birth. She owned that she had attended her lady to the cathedral when the countess and the infant were christened, and that M. de la Motte was also present. "He has taken body and soul too," no doubt the miserable gentleman thought.

He happened to alight at the very hotel where the fugitives of whom he was in search had had their quarters four months before (so that for two months at least poor M. de Saverne must have lain ill at Nanci at the commencement of his journey). The boatman, the luggage people, and Marthe the servant followed the count to this hotel; and the femme de chambre remembered how Madame Dubois and her brother had been at the hotel—a poor sick lady, who sat up talking the whole night. Her brother slept in the right wing across the court. Monsieur has the lady's room. How that child did cry! See, the windows look on the port.

"Yes, this was the lady's room."

"And the child lay on which side?"

"On that side."

M. de Saverne looked at the place which the woman pointed out, stooped his head towards the pillow, and cried as if his heart would break. The fisherman's tears rolled down too over his brown face and hands. *Le pauvre homme, le pauvre homme!*

"Come into my sitting-room with me," he said to the fisherman. The man followed him, and shut the door.

His burst of feeling was now over. He became entirely calm.

"You know the house from which this woman came, at Winchelsea, in England?"

"Yes."

"You took a gentleman and a lady thither?"

"Yes."

"You remember the man?"

"Perfectly."

"For thirty louis will you go to sea to-night, take a passenger, and deliver a letter to M. la Motte?"

The man agreed: and I take out from my secretary that letter, in its tawny ink of fifty years' date, and read it with a strange interest always.

* I had this from the woman herself, whom we saw when we paid our visit to Lorraine and Alsace in 1814.

*"To the Chevalier FRANCOIS JOSEPH DE LA MOTTE, at Winchelsea,
in England."*

"I knew I should find you. I never doubted where you were. But for a sharp illness which I made at Nanci, I should have been with you two months earlier. After what has occurred between us, I know this invitation will be to you as a command, and that you will hasten as you did to my rescue from the English bayonets at Hastenbeck. Between us, M. le Chevalier, it is to life or death. I depend upon you to communicate this to no one, and to follow the messenger, who will bring you to me.

"Count de SAVERNE."

This letter was brought to our house one evening as we sat in the front shop. I had the child on my knee, which would have no other playfellow but me. The countess was pretty quiet that evening—the night calm, and the windows open. Grandfather was reading his book. The countess and M. de la Motte were at cards, though, poor thing, she could scarce play for ten minutes at a time; and there comes a knock, at which grandfather puts down his book.*

"All's well," says he. "Entrez. Comment, c'est vous, Bidois?"

"Oui, c'est bien moi, patron!" says Mons. Bidois, a great fellow in boots and petticoat, with an eelskin queue hanging down to his heels. "C'est là le petit du pauv' Jean Louis? Est i genti le pti patron!" And as he looks at me, he rubs a hand across his nose.

At this moment Madame la Comtesse gave one, two, three screams, a laugh, and cries—"Ah, c'est mon mari qui revient de la guerre. Il est là; à la croisée. Bon jour, M. le Comte! Bon jour. Vous avez une petite fille bien laide, bien laide, que je n'aime pas du tout, pas du tout, pas du tout! He is there! I saw him at the window. There, there! Hide me from him. He will kill me, he will kill me!" she cried.

"Calmez vous, Clarisse," says the chevalier, who was weary, no doubt, of the poor lady's endless outcries and follies.

"Calmez vous, ma fille!" sings out mother, from the inner room, where she was washing.

"Ah, Monsieur is the Chevalier de la Motte?" says Bidois.

"Après Monsieur," says the chevalier, looking haughtily up from the cards.

"In that case, I have a letter for M. le Chevalier;" and the sailor handed to the Chevalier de la Motte that letter which I have translated, the ink of which was black and wet then, though now it is sere and faded.

This chevalier had faced death and danger in a score of daredevil expeditions. At the game of steel and lead there was no cooler performer. He put the letter which he had received quietly into his pocket, finished

* There was a particular knock, as I learned later, in use among grandpa's private friends, and Mons. Bidois no doubt had this signal.

his game with the countess, and telling Bidois to follow him to his lodgings, took leave of the company. I daresay the poor countess built up a house with the cards, and took little more notice. Mother, going to close the shutters, said, "It was droll, that little man, the friend to Bidois, was still standing in the street." You see we had all sorts of droll friends. Seafaring men, speaking a jargon of English, French, Dutch, were constantly dropping in upon us. Dear Heaven ! when I think in what a company I have lived, and what a *galère* I rowed in, is it not a wonder that I did not finish where some of my friends did ?

I made a *drôle de métier* at this time. I was set by grandfather to learn his business. Our apprentice taught me the commencement of the noble art of wig-weaving. As soon as I was tall enough to stand to a gentleman's nose I was promised to be *promoted* to be a shaver. I trotted on mother's errands with her bandboxes, and what not ; and I was made dry-nurse to poor Madame's baby, who, as I said, loved me most of all in the house ; and who would put her little dimpled hands out and crow with delight to see me. The first day I went out with this little baby in a little wheel chair mother got for her the town boys made rare fun of me : and I had to fight one, as poor little Agnes sate sucking her little thumb in her chair, I suppose ; and whilst the battle was going on, who should come up but Doctor Barnard, the English rector of Saint Philip's, who lent us French Protestants the nave of his church for our service, whilst our tumble-down old church was being mended. Doctor Barnard (for a reason which I did not know at that time, but which I am compelled to own now was a good one) did not like grandfather, nor mother, nor our family. You may be sure our people abused him in return. He was called a haughty priest—a vilain beeg-veeg, mother used to say, in her French-English. And perhaps one of the causes of her dislike to him was, that his *big vig*—a fine cauliflower it was—was powdered at another barber's. Well, whilst the battle royal was going on between me and Tom Caffin (dear heart ! how well I remember the fellow, though—let me see—it is fifty-four years since we punched each other's little noses), Doctor Barnard walks up to us boys and stops the fighting. "You little rogues ! I'll have you all put in the stocks and whipped by my beadle," says the doctor, who was a magistrate too : "as for this little French barber, he is always in mischief!"

"They laughed at me and called me Dry-nurse, and wanted to upset the little cart, sir, and I wouldn't bear it. And it's my duty to protect a poor child that can't help itself," said I, very stoutly. "Her mother is ill. Her nurse has run away, and she has nobody—nobody to protect her but me—and 'Notre Père qui est aux cieux ;'" and I held up my little hand as grandfather used to do ; "and if those boys hurt the child I will fight for her."

The doctor rubbed his hand across his eyes ; and felt in his pocket and gave me a dollar.

"And come to see us all at the Rectory, child," Mrs. Barnard says, who

was with the doctor; and she looked at the little baby that was in its cot, and said, "Poor thing, poor thing!"

And the doctor, turning round to the English boys, still holding me by the hand, said, "Mind, all you boys! If I hear of you being such cowards again as to strike this little lad for doing his duty, I will have you whipped by my beadle, as sure as my name is Thomas Barnard. Shake hands, you Thomas Caffin, with the French boy;" and I said, "I would shake hands or fight it out whenever Tom Caffin liked;" and so took my place as pony again, and pulled my little cart down Sandgate.

These stories got about amongst the townspeople, and fishermen, and seafaring folk, I suppose, and the people of our little circle; and they were the means, God help me, of bringing me in those very early days *a legacy* which I have still. You see, the day after Bidois, the French fisherman, paid us his visit, as I was pulling my little cart up the hill to a little farmer's house where grandfather and a partner of his had some pigeons, of which I was very fond as a boy, I met a little dark man whose face I cannot at all recall to my mind, but who spoke French and German to me like grandfather and mother. "That is the child of Madame von Zabern?" says he, trembling very much.

"Ja, Herr!" says the little boy.

O Agnes, Agnes! How the years roll away! What strange events have befallen us: what passionate griefs have we had to suffer: what a merciful Heaven has protected us, since that day when your father knelt over the little car, in which his child lay sleeping! I have the picture in my mind now. I see a winding road leading down to one of the gates of our town; the blue marsh-land, and yonder, across the marsh, Rye towers and gables; a great silver sea stretching beyond; and that dark man's figure stooping and looking at the child asleep. He never kissed the infant or touched her. I remember it woke smiling, and held out its little arms, and he turned away with a sort of groan.

Bidois, the French fisherman I spoke of as having been to see us on the night before, came up here with another companion, an Englishman, I think.

"Ah! we seek for you everywhere, Monsieur le Comte," says he. "The tide serves and it is full time."

"Monsieur le Chevalier is on board?" says the Count de Saverne.

"Il est bien là," says the fisherman. And they went down the hill through the gate, without turning to look back.

Mother was quite quiet and gentle all that day. It seemed as if something scared her. The poor countess prattled and laughed, or cried in her unconscious way. But grandfather at evening prayer that night making the exposition rather long, mother stamped her foot, and said, "Assez bavardé comme ça, mon père," and sank back in her chair with her apron over her face.

She remained all next day very silent, crying often, and reading in our great German Bible. She was kind to me that day. I remember her

saying, in her deep voice, "Thou art a brave boy, Denikin." It was seldom she patted my head so softly. That night our patient was very wild; and laughing a great deal, and singing so that the people would stop in the streets to listen.

Doctor Barnard again met me that day, dragging my little carriage, and he fetched me into the Rectory for the first time, and gave me cake and wine, and the book of the *Arabian Nights*, and the ladies admired the little baby, and said it was a pity it was little Papist, and the doctor hoped I was not going to turn Papist, and I said, "Oh, never." Neither mother nor I liked that darkling Roman Catholic clergyman who was fetched over from our neighbours at the Priory by M. de la Motte. The chevalier was very firm himself in that religion. I little thought then that I was to see him on a day when his courage and his faith were both to have an awful trial.

. . . I was reading then in this fine book of Monsieur Galland which the doctor had given me. I had no orders to go to bed, strange to say, and I daresay was peeping into the cave of the Forty Thieves along with Master Ali Baba, when I heard the clock whirring previously to striking twelve, and steps coming rapidly up our empty street.

Mother started up looking quite haggard, and undid the bolt of the door. "C'est lui!" says she, with her eyes starting, and the Chevalier de la Motte came in, looking as white as a corpse.

Poor Madame de Saverne upstairs, awakened by the striking clock perhaps, began to sing overhead, and the chevalier gave a great start, looking more ghastly than before, as my mother with an awful face looked at him.

"Il l'a voulu," says M. de la Motte, hanging down his head; and again poor Madame's crazy voice began to sing.

REPORT.

"On the 27th June of this year, 1769, the Comte de Saverne arrived at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and lodged at the Écu de France, where also was staying M. le Marquis du Quesne Menneville, Chef d'Escadre of the Naval Armies of his Majesty. The Comte de Saverne was previously unknown to the Marquis du Quesne, but recalling to M. du Quesne's remembrance the fact that his illustrious ancestor the Admiral Duquesne professed the Reformed religion, as did M. de Saverne himself, M. de Saverne entreated the Marquis du Quesne to be his friend in a rencontre which deplorable circumstances rendered unavoidable.

"At the same time, M. de Saverne stated to M. le Marquis du Quesne the causes of his quarrel with the Chevalier Francis Joseph de la Motte, late officer of the regiment of Soubise, at present residing in England in the town of Winchelsea, in the county of Sussex. The statement made by the Comte de Saverne was such as to convince M. du Quesne of the count's right to exact a reparation from the Chevalier de la Motte.

"A boat was despatched on the night of the 29th June, with a

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a messenger bearing the note of M. le Comte de Saverne. And in this boat M. de la Motte returned from England.

"The undersigned Count de Bérigny, in garrison at Boulogne, and an acquaintance of M. de la Motte, consented to serve as his witness in the meeting with M. de Saverne.

"The meeting took place at seven o'clock in the morning, on the sands at half a league from the port of Boulogne: and the weapons chosen were pistols. Both gentlemen were perfectly calm and collected, as one might expect from officers distinguished in the King's service, who had faced the enemies of France as comrades together.

"Before firing, M. le Chevalier de la Motte advanced four steps, and holding his pistol down, and laying his hand on his heart, he said,—'I swear, on the faith of a Christian, and the honour of a gentleman, that I am innocent of the charge laid against me by Monsieur de Saverne.'

"The Count de Saverne said,—'M. le Chevalier de la Motte, I have made no charge; and if I had, a lie costs you nothing.'

"M. de la Motte, saluting the witnesses courteously, and with grief rather than anger visible upon his countenance, returned to his line on the sand which was marked out as the place where he was to stand, at a distance of ten paces from his adversary.

"At the signal being given both fired simultaneously. The ball of M. de Saverne grazed M. de la Motte's side curl, while his ball struck M. de Saverne in the right breast. M. de Saverne stood a moment, and fell.

"The seconds, the surgeon, and M. de la Motte advanced towards the fallen gentleman; and M. de la Motte, holding up his hand, again said,—'I take Heaven to witness the person is innocent.'

"The Comte de Saverne seemed to be about to speak. He lifted himself from the sand, supporting himself on one arm: but all he said was,—'You, you——' and a great issue of blood rushed from his throat, and he fell back, and, with a few convulsions, died.

(Signed) " *Marquis du QUESNE MENNEVILLE,*
 " *Chef d'Escadre aux Armées Navales du Roy.*
 " *Comte de BÉRIGNY, Brigadier de Cavalerie.*"

SURGEON'S REPORT.

"I, Jean Batiste Drouot, surgeon-major of the Regiment Royal Cravate, in garrison at Boulogne-sur-Mer, certify that I was present at the meeting which ended so lamentably. The death of the gentleman who succumbed was immediate; the ball, passing to the right of the middle of the breastbone, penetrated the lung and the large artery supplying it with blood, and caused death by immediate suffocation."

The Two Aspects of History.

HISTORY is the story of Humanity, the records of the evolution of our collective Life. And there are two aspects in which it is regarded : one darkened by a mournful sadness, the other brightened by a radiant hope ; one presenting a panorama of successive nations, civilizations, and dynasties, as so many fleeting, perishing efforts of the race to attain stability, or, to achieve an ideal standard ; the other unfolding the successive episodes of Progress. Which is the true aspect ? Is the story one of hopeless *corso ricorso*, of rising and falling, or one of gradual though laborious evolution ? The records tell of one nation after another appearing on the scene, struggling, conquering, and succumbing. The arts which were the glories of the time ; the knowledge which was amassed with so much toil, and was guarded with so much jealousy ; the wealth which was stored up—all are dissipated, all disappear. The great peoples of antiquity have perished, and even the language in which their traditions were preserved has vanished. Where now are Babylon and Nineveh, and what has become of their wealth, their arts, their civilization ? Where are Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Bagdad, and Bassora ?

Philosophy accepts the facts, but sees a higher fact which saves us from despair : that fact is the existence of Humanity as a collective Life, of which nations are the organs, and individuals the units. The present is the offspring of the past, and is big with the future. Every successive episode may not seem an improvement, but it is a stage of evolution ; just as in the development of an animal organism some changes seem an apparent undoing of what had been effected—as when a mass of cells dissolve, or when a provisional organ disappears—but in a little while a higher form emerges. Nations perish, individuals vanish, but the Race survives, and, surviving, advances towards completer life. Those who deplore the destruction of ancient civilizations will, nevertheless, see without despair the old man grey with knowledge and experience drop into his grave, to be succeeded by an infant who begins the career afresh. The existence of the old man has prepared that of the infant. Though much seems to perish, much is known to be immortal. The old man leaves his legacy. True it is that much valuable personal experience must perish with him, because it is personal. But his life has been an influence, for evil or for good. His work has enriched the world. His deeds and words, the gravest and the lightest, in due proportion, have modified the lives of his contemporaries, and must in turn thereby modify successors. Even a modest life helps to keep up the sense of nobleness and worth ; perhaps adds something to the sharpness of that sense. With moral as with physical wealth the case is

analogous: if a man leaves no fortune to his heirs, no accumulated surplus which will manifestly increase their power, he has, at least, by his labour kept up the general wealth of the community.

The history of our globe tells of gradual progress towards higher, that is, more complex, life. The soil must be prepared, the climate must be prepared, before a rich and varied vegetation can flourish in it. One great mode of preparation is the decay of vegetable remains. On the herbless granite nothing but simple lichens can find a home; they multiply, die, and their remains form a nidus for a higher life. It is the same with the history of Humanity. Our life is in many aspects obviously moulded by the past; and where this is not obvious, we have still reason to believe the influence exists. Take only our language, and at once you read in it the legacies of centuries, and of widely-diversified nations. Take our simplest arts, our vulgarest tools, and the same fact appears.

I do not sympathize with that Optimism which denies the presence of evil or of failure, nor with that optimist view of History which regards whatever has occurred as the best conceivable for the welfare of the race; but I hold that for good, or for evil, nothing is done in vain; no effort is without influence; and even in the presence of facts so striking as the destruction of Athenian civilization, or the barbarian invasions, with the "dark ages" as a result, I see no final retardation of the progress of Humanity. Athens perished, and the loss may stir our regrets, as our regrets are stirred when a wise or good man dies. But although Athens perished, the world was Hellenized. In spite of her genius and her success, in spite of her splendour in art, philosophy, political and military energy, her organization was in many respects too narrow for complete life: it was not fitted for empire; it did not satisfy the ideal of man, and it perished, as all incomplete forms must perish. Let us not wail over the ruins of temples trodden under barbarian feet, or if we wail, let the regret be tempered by other thoughts; just as in gazing on the faded splendour of some lovely woman, we remember how a few years gone she charmed the eye and softened the roughness of beholders, and thus her perishable beauty has had imperishable influence. The world is richer for Athenian effort. The visible products have almost entirely disappeared; but the invisible products are active to this very day, and their influence is, in conjunction with many other influences, moulding the destinies of the world.

How do I know that this invisible influence exists? As I know that the rivers poured into the sea exist in the sea, commingling with all other rivers, and making the sea what it is, although no trace of any river can now be followed. All trace of Greek influence has not vanished. But if every vestige had been swept away—if Europe had not been consciously moved by Homer, Sophocles, or Phidias, never occupied with the thoughts of Plato, Aristotle, or Hippocrates—we could still point to one great and undeniable source of Grecian influence (and of Athenian through Grecian) in many doctrines of the Christian Church. The very name of Chris-

tianity is Greek; and, as Herder * finely says, "If Jerusalem was its cradle, Alexandria was its school." To the same effect Dean Milman: "Though the religion of Christ had its origin among a Syrian people—though its Divine Author spoke an Aramaic dialect—Christianity was from the first a Greek religion." It was in the Greek language that the Christian writings appeared; and that language was spoken from India to the Atlantic, from Lybia to Thule. St. Paul was a Greek Jew. St. John platonized. The early Fathers were reared in Greek philosophy; and that philosophy moulded their religious conceptions. "For some considerable (it cannot but be an indefinable) part of the three first centuries, the Church of Rome, and most if not all the churches of the West, were, if we may so speak, Greek religious colonies. Their language was Greek, their organization was Greek, their writers Greek, their Scriptures Greek; and many vestiges and traditions show that their ritual, their liturgy, was Greek. Through Greek the communication of the churches of Rome and of the West was constantly kept up with the East; and through Greek every heresiarch, having found his way to Rome, propagated with more or less success his peculiar doctrines. Greek was the commercial language throughout the empire; by which the Jews before the destruction of their city, already so widely disseminated through the world, and altogether engaged in commerce, carried on their affairs. The Greek Old Testament was read in the synagogues of the foreign Jews. The Gospels and Apostolic writings, so soon as they became part of the public worship, would be read, as the Septuagint was, in their original tongue. All the Christian extant writings which appeared in Rome and in the West are Greek, or were originally Greek. So, too, it was in Gaul: here the first Christians were settled chiefly in the Greek cities, which owned Marseilles as their parent, and which retained the use of the Greek as their vernacular tongue." † Nay, it is only in the subtle and flexible Greek language that many of the doctrines and heresies which animated and sometimes maddened the fervent speculative crowds, could be rendered intelligible. In Europe, at the present day, it is found difficult to understand the passion for such extremely remote distinctions as those which disturbed the early church; but to minds educated in Grecian subtlety and Oriental mysticism, such distinctions were vital. As Dr. Stanley says of the hotly-debated Arian controversy, "When we perceive the abstract questions on which it turned,—when we reflect that they related not to any dealings of the Deity with man, not even properly speaking to the Divinity or Humanity of Christ, nor to the doctrine of the Trinity (for all these points were acknowledged by both parties)—but to the ineffable relations of the Godhead before the remotest beginning of time, it is difficult to conceive that by such inquiries the passions of mankind should be roused to fury. Yet so it was; at least in Egypt, where it first began. All classes took part in it,

* HERDER: *Ideen*, ii. p. 329.

† MILMAN: *History of Latin Christianity*, 1854, vol. i., p. 27.

and almost all took part with equal energy. ‘Bishop rose against bishop,’ says Eusebius, ‘district against district, only to be compared to the Symplegades dashed against each other on a stormy sea.’ So violent were the discussions that they were parodied in Pagan theatres, and the Emperor’s statues were broken in the public squares in the conflicts which took place. The common name by which the Arians and their system were designated was the Maniacs—the Ariomaniacs; and their frantic conduct on public occasions afterwards goes far to justify the appellation. Sailors, millers, and travellers sang the disputed doctrines at their occupations, or on their journeys; ‘every corner, every alley of the city’ (this was said afterwards of Constantinople, and must have been still more true of Alexandria) was full of discussions—the streets, the market-places, the drapers, the money-changers, the victuallers. Ask any man, How many oboli, he answers by dogmatizing on generated and ungenerated being. Inquire the price of bread, and you are told the Son is subordinate to the Father. Ask if the bath is ready, and you are told the Son arose out of nothing.”* Ludicrous as such a picture may seem, it gives a vivid idea of the fervour of speculative activity which then animated society. That this fervour was as yeast to the nations no one will deny. We cannot always trace its visible effects, but we know that it must have effected much. And if the Dark Ages followed, were they ages of retrogression and death, as well as of darkness, or did their darkness foster germination? Considered solely with reference to Letters and Science, the period is discouraging; considered with reference to the evolution of Humanity, it is one of potent germinal development. Out of it issued the modern world, so incomparably greater than the ancient world, greater not simply in all social aspects, but also in letters and science. I do not mean that Shakspeare and Dante were greater poets than Sophocles and Virgil, or that Newton and Cuvier were greater philosophers than Hipparchus and Aristotle; but the reach and range of modern poetry and science are higher and wider than the ancient; as the range and complexity of modern social life are greater than those of ancient civilization. What we call the Dark Ages was a period of dissolution and of reconstruction. The old world was breaking up, and the new world reconstructing itself on the ruins. By the universal substitution of serfage for slavery, and the gradual emancipation of the serfs, a revolution was effected more far-reaching and more full of germinal potency than perhaps any revolution which had before been known. The People appeared upon the scene. With the People there rose into adequate power the Industrial Order, which has profoundly modified the world, and will continue to change it.

The modern world is notoriously a great advance upon the ancient world. It has new *capacities* of development. It has developed, among other things, the complete idea of Freedom. The ancients, it is true, had an idea of Freedom, but of Freedom based on slavery, consequently relating only to individuals. We admire their splendid rhetoric on Liberty, but

* STANLEY: *Lectures on History of the Eastern Church*, 1861, p. 98.

know that it never concerned the people; just as we admire the solid grandeur of the Roman roads, but know that these noble highways were without byways: the broad road went straight from city to city; but the country on each side of it was one unbroken plain of tillage, or of forest and morass, without intersecting roads and lanes. The Germans—to whom it is usual to attribute the introduction of the idea of Freedom—had no more sense of it than the Greeks or Romans. Their slaves were serfs. The modification is no doubt important, but it is only a modification. The true conception of Freedom as a sacred human right arose in modern times; its nursery was the Industrial Order; and even in our own day it is among the eminently industrial nations, English, American, Dutch, and Swiss, that the idea is most completely realized.

Thus even in the much-decried Middle Ages we see a great travail of nations. The belief in Progress is based upon a more or less distinct conception of the great Human Existence made up of the countless individual existences. Is there evidence for such a conception? Many philosophers believe the evidence to be overwhelming. They affirm that just as the individual organism is made up of countless microscopic cells, each of which has its own independent life, is born, is developed, and dies, subserving by its life the general life of which it is an unit; in like manner Humanity is made up of countless individual lives, each independent, yet each subserving the general end. Both conceptions are modern. It was long before Biology was enabled to show that the organism was composed of countless cells. It was long before Philosophy could show that the individual existences made one collective life; but when once this had been shown, its value became irresistible. We then first understood the meaning of the old phrase, "the Human Family," obscurely and fitfully as the phrase was used. We understood that if the family had one life and one story—if the nation had one life and one story—all nations and all families must have one life and one story. We understood that if the wide seas rolled between two peoples, if centuries divided their histories, if no direct visible bond of interest united them, they were, nevertheless, necessarily, though perhaps invisibly, united, and were all unconsciously working towards a common end. Sad experience is now bringing this home to thousands, who are made to feel how their life is affected by what is going on at the other ends of the earth. Starving Lancashire can understand how an iniquity perpetrated on the coasts of Africa is not without a Nemesis whose footprints are visible in Manchester. If every tree that is cut down by squatters in a primeval forest affects the climate of the world, if every invention increases the wealth of the world, it is by devious and invisible routes, which are not the less effective because they escape our notice; and in all periods of History, could we read them aright, we should see the progress of Evolution where a despairing philosophy can see nothing but the planless episodes of destruction and change.

The Theatre in China.



HE Chinese have a tradition that, on the seventh day of the seventh month, Nin-lang and Chih-nii, the patron saints of agriculture and weaving, are allowed to meet. According to the legend, these personages were at one time man and wife. The Milky Way (imagined to be a river by the Chinese) flowed between and separated them; but on the seventh day of the seventh month the magpies gather together from all parts of the world, to unite their bodies in a long bridge, across which the husband can reach his beloved; and hence the magpie is so sacred a bird in China that it is thought a sin to deprive it of life.

On the evening of this memorable day, in the year 745, K'aeyuen, the sixth emperor of the Sang dynasty, with his queen, the celebrated Yangkwei-fè, stood gazing on the starlit sky; and she, remembering the occasion, broke into protestations of affection, assuring him that she would never leave him in this life, and that they would tread the spiritual walks of eternity inseparable. So runs tradition; which further says that the emperor resolved to reward the love of his young queen by discovering a novel amusement for her. Now this was a great thing for K'aeyuen to do; for he was an austere prince, who, disgusted with the frivolities of his ancestors, had resolved to purge the empire of the extravagance and debauchery which was ruining it. He proceeded so far in this direction that he soon arrived at the other extreme; and his court, filled with learned men and persons of useful but dry accomplishments, afforded few pleasures to his young bride and her attendants.

After some consideration, the emperor summoned before him his chief minister, and instructed him to select from the families of the numerous court attendants a number of young children, who, having been carefully instructed and handsomely dressed, should recite before the beautiful Yangkwei-fè the heroic deeds of his ancestors; and this was the beginning of the theatre in China. The performances of these juvenile actors usually took place in a pavilion in the open air, among

fruit-trees; hence they were called the Children of the Pear-garden, a name which has since been universally applied to play-actors.

There are now about 10,000 men engaged in this profession, and of these about 7,000 come from one place, namely, the Hwingning district of Nganching-foo, the capital of the province of Ngan Hwing. There are scarcely any female performers throughout China. They are only known at Pekin, the capital, at Soochow, and at Yangchow, the two gayest cities in the empire. The Chinese have, however, provided a very good substitute: they select male children of effeminate appearance, and carefully train them to speak in the high-pitched, jarring tone of voice peculiar to Chinese women; their eyebrows are shaved off, and replaced by the gracefully curved "willow-line" in black pigment; their hair is arranged like that of a woman, and many of them bind their feet tightly with linen bandages, and accustom themselves to walk on the points of their toes, so that while actually on the stage they are enabled to wear the hoof-like shoes of the women—completing the illusion. Indeed, if it were not well known that women do not appear on the stage, it would be hard to convince a beholder that the gaudily-dressed, painted figure before him, tottering along with uncertain step on the famous "golden lilies," and, perhaps, leaning on the shoulder of a child, was a man.

The drama in China is not divided, like ours, into tragedy and comedy, but into three principal divisions, viz., Kwān Keang, the Urh-hwang-teaon, and the Se-pe-teaon. These divisions relate rather to the accompaniments, and the general manner of performing the piece, than to the style of the play itself, which, in nine cases out of ten, represents the historically recorded deeds of the sovereigns of former dynasties, never those of the reigning one.

The Kwān Keang is the one most in vogue among the higher orders, and is decidedly the most worthy of notice. The actors in it, which never exceed four or five, are generally the pick of the corps, and are much better paid than the rest. The musical accompaniment is softer than in the others, and usually consists of flutes and the three-stringed guitar. The general style of the piece is of a mournful tendency; the aim of the actor being to excite the pity and compassion of the beholders; and nearly the whole performance is carried on in singing. It is, in fact, the opera of China.

The Urh-hwang-teaon and the Se-pe-teaon, on the other hand, are of a more stirring character, representing court intrigues, battles, and so forth,—in which as many as forty to fifty people appear on the stage at one time. The musical accompaniment is of the most thrilling and distressing nature. It consists of shrill pipes, sonorous gongs, and an abominable instrument of auricular torture, called a Tā drum—a thing about the size and shape of half an ordinary-sized melon, on which an indefatigable performer keeps up an incessant tatoo, only relieved at intervals by his recruiting exhausted nature with a cup of tea. Nearly

the whole repertory of a theatre consists of historical pieces ; representations of domestic life on the stage being almost unknown. In their general character, they often resemble the " moralities " of the early English stage, setting forth the senses, affections, virtues, and vices of mankind.

The Chinese possess but few regular theatres entirely devoted to these performances : they take place in temples, on temporary stages, or in private houses. In the south theatres are unknown, but in Pekin there are seven, and in Soochow five. Allowing a few more for some of the principal cities, it is believed on good authority that the whole number of these edifices throughout the empire would not amount to twenty. Every day performances are held in them, not as in Europe, during the evening, but lasting the whole day. Their shape is a parallelogram, one of the long sides being occupied by the stage, the other three by the boxes (of which there are two tiers) and the pit. Both stage and boxes are covered in, but the pit is exposed to the open air. The upper tier corresponds to our " dress circle," which is again divided into boxes in which are arranged tables, chairs, and all the accessories for a feast ; for the lessee of the theatre combines the restaurant with the drama, and while he provides food for the mind, gives every facility for performing the like good office to the body. To this " dress circle " the gentleman who desires to give an entertainment invites his friends, sometimes for a week, sometimes even for ten days ; and here, day after day, they sit listlessly watching the performance, and enjoying the luxurious entertainment provided for them. But our hospitable host has to pay heavily for all this ; a box with commanding position in the dress circle being let at not less than twenty to thirty strings of cash of a thousand each, equivalent in English money to about 6*l.* 10*s.* This sum secures the exclusive use of the box during the entire performance, and an elegant repast in constant readiness for the host and his friends, with wines, tea, &c. *ad libitum*.

The second tier is not subdivided into boxes, but is simply provided with rows of chairs, a small tea-poy being set between each pair. To this tier shopkeepers and the small gentry resort, and are provided with a seat, tea, and cakes, for a daily sum of 400 or 500 cash, equivalent in English to about half-a-crown.

To the pit crowd the canaille, beggars, itinerant tradesmen, barbers, all who cannot or do not like to pay : for the pit is free. Seats there are none here, and in fact they would be worse than useless ; for every now and then a gang of " roughs " comes rushing in, anxious to secure a view of the stage, and drive the mass before them. The crowd now sways backwards and forwards, as they are pushed on by fresh comers and back again by the unfortunate occupants of the front row—these being driven by the pressure completely under the stage, where, of course, they can see nothing, and are consequently excited to greater efforts to regain their lost position. These scenes of tumult evidently originated the expression of the " sea," applied by the Chinese to the pit.

The theatres in the temples are the same as those just described, only on a much smaller scale. They have only one tier of boxes facing the stage; they are usually allotted to the ladies—a piece of gallantry very uncommon among the Celestial lords of the creation, who are by no means given to depriving themselves of any advantage for the benefit of women. In the pit of the temple theatres gentlemen can hire chairs at a cost of about one penny per day.

The performances in these temple theatres do not take place every day, but when some one desires to return thanks to his god for a benefit received, or wishes to entertain his friends; or on the occasion of the religious celebration of the festival of the god within whose temple the performances take place. In this last case the entertainment is got up by the priests, who send their neophytes round with a subscription paper, and then engage as large and skilful a company of actors as their funds will allow. In the case of a person desirous of giving an entertainment to his friends, an agreement is made with the priest for the stage and boxes for a certain number of days at about five shillings a day.

There are only two temples in China in which these performances are not allowed, namely, those dedicated to Confucius and to the god of war.

Acting is often hereditary in families, and in many instances goes on from generation to generation without any other profession being thought of. This arises from the fact that actors, in common with boatmen, barbers, and some other classes, are debarred from taking literary rank: consequently, they never enter upon the requisite preliminary course of study. And not only is a play-actor forbidden to enter himself as a candidate for examination, but his descendants are also debarred from so doing to the third generation.

It may be readily imagined, therefore, that no one, unless driven to it by the direst misfortune, would think of joining this proscribed body. However, they get over the difficulty of recruiting their forces by purchasing young children from poverty-stricken parents, and carefully training them. When these are old enough to appear in public, they enter into an agreement with the manager of the company, binding themselves to serve him and the company for a certain period of years, usually about six to eight. At the end of this time they are allowed either to return home, to renew their engagement, or to join some other company.

Some of these companies are very large. The great company of Foochow, called the Ta-ke-shing, or the Company of Great Prosperity, comprises about 110 persons, inclusive of musicians, porters, &c. Many others contain sixty and seventy, and the smallest not more than twenty. They usually reside together in some large establishment, whence they are constantly being hired out by mandarins or private gentlemen. They have a great dread of being summoned to perform before officials, who never give them more money than is barely sufficient to purchase food, and perhaps a small douceur; altogether, about a day's pay among the

company. They fare better at the hands of the guests, each of whom usually gives them money equivalent to about fifteen or twenty shillings; but the poor fellows get little of this, for greedy official retainers prowl about them, and "squeeze" a good half of it, which they dare not withhold, fearing to get into trouble. On the other hand, they are always pleased to receive a summons to perform in some gentleman's private house, where they are usually well paid. A company of some sixty or seventy performers receive from the master of the house about twenty-five strings of cash per diem, that is, about five pounds sterling, or half-a-crown each for the best actors, a shilling each for the next, and sixpence for the supernumeraries and porters.

The last class of actors are the itinerants, who constantly travel from place to place. These are mostly engaged by the poorer classes and petty shopkeepers, who form a large proportion of the inhabitants of a Chinese city. On festive occasions a whole street will club together and engage a dramatic corps to perform before them, sometimes only for one evening, sometimes for two or three days. Matters being arranged, in due course the company arrives. Depositing the "properties" on the ground, they set to work to construct their theatre—an indispensable preliminary, to which no one in China seems at present to have directed his attention. But the actors do not venture to put up the edifice in any of the more frequented thoroughfares. In about an hour it is complete; and the visitor sees before him a rough platform of planks, laid on trestles, and stretching across and up and down the street: this platform is about fifteen feet square. One end has the top and sides screened by coarse matting, supported by long bamboos; the rest is open. The theatre being ready, the properties are brought out and the stage furnished, which operation consists in arranging a throne (a property box), a rickety table, and two helpless-looking stools.

While the actors are dressing behind the piece of matting, which, hanging behind the throne, is so contrived as to render them partially invisible to the spectators, the musicians take their places in front in one corner of the stage, bringing with them their musical instruments, tea-pot, and tobacco-pipes. The man who has charge of the horrible Tă drum, eyeing it, apparently, with great affection, and eagerly grasping the sticks, seems to wait impatiently the signal to begin. One might almost fancy that he was chuckling with delight at the prospect of the abominable noise he was about to make: the lobster and clarionet blowers prepare their instruments, and the gentleman with the gong gives it a preliminary tap, to intimate that all is ready. Hark! the overture commences. And what an overture! All the discords of Pandemonium are assembled in it! And yet Chinamen enjoy the performance, obviously.

And now the play commences: the deeds of illustrious bygone emperors are rehearsed by these strolling players before the crowd of gaping shopkeepers. And admirably do these poor creatures perform their various parts, notwithstanding their miserable appearance, their

mat-screens, and their ridiculous scenery. The modulation of voice, expression of countenance, and performance generally, would be creditable to many actors of those countries where means and opportunities of acquiring the histrionic art abound, and where the remuneration is comparatively liberal; while these poor strollers get perhaps fourpence as their highest pay, for acting for several hours without hardly an instant's rest.

The dresses of the performers are very beautiful. They are all taken from those of the last dynasty—the Ming—and are about the most picturesque the Chinese have ever had.

All large companies have two managers, called the Paowchoo and the Changpan. The first of these is the manager *par excellence*. He performs the duties of the Lord Chamberlain; and no piece is acted by the company which has not first been revised by him or received his sanction. He keeps the treasury, and engages or dismisses performers. The other manager has the more immediate superintendence of the members of the company—caters for them, and is held responsible for their good behaviour on all occasions. Both these managers are old play-actors.

In the Chinese drama, certain words or characters are chosen to point out the general characteristics of the different *dramatis personæ*, and these particular words are used in every play indiscriminately, whether its complexion be tragic or comic. No similar usage can be found on the European stage, unless, indeed, we except the invariable terms of harlequin, clown, pantaloon, &c. in the English pantomime, which mark with precision the nature and character of the several performers, however varied may be the action of the piece. The words usually employed by the Chinese to represent these characters are six. The first of these generally typifies the principal character as a father, uncle, &c., or any person somewhat advanced in age. It is the *père noble* of the French stage. The second is called “tsăng,” and is applied to the characters with painted faces, who put a daub of colour—red, black, or more commonly white—across the bridge of the nose and under the eyes, giving the idea of a great piece of sticking-plaster being put over the face. Hence, this class is subdivided into red, black, and white “tsăng.” The third-class, “săng,” is a male character. He is the chief performer, or rather the hero of the piece. The fourth class, the “tan,” is the female character, subdivided into the principal, the second, the old, and the standing, respectively answering to the *premier rôle*, *première ingénue*, *mère noble*, and *soubrette* of the French stage. The fifth division, “chow,” seems to typify a character disagreeable either from personal deformity or some other cause. The last, “wae,” is a painted-faced character, the clown or merryman of the company, and is often decorated with a fine grotesque beard.

The great divisions of the piece, or the acts, as we style them, exist perhaps rather in the book than in the representation, not being so distinctly marked on the Chinese stage as on ours, by the supposed lapse of intervals of time.

The commencement of the piece is called "sie-tsz," which means literally a door, or the side-posts of a door, and hence, metaphorically, the opening. The rest are styled "che," or breaks. The words "shang" and "hea," to ascend and descend, are used for *enter* and *exit*.

Every theatrical company has a stock of about forty or fifty pieces, all of which are thoroughly known to the actors, who could go through any one of them at a moment's notice. The manager has a slip of ivory about twelve inches by two, on which are written in red or gold letters the names of these plays. When a gentleman has invited a party of friends to witness one of these entertainments, and the guests are seated, a female actor comes forward with this list, and hands it to the master of the house, who presents it to the guest on his left—the post of honour. The guest selects a piece, and proclaims it aloud. Two or three other pieces are probably selected by other guests, and the list is then returned. Or sometimes the master of the house obtains the list beforehand, and provides copies on red paper for each of the assembled guests. The performances commence with the piece first selected, the others following in their regular order. When these are concluded, others are chosen, and so on till the guests are tired.



Sentence of Death Regarded.

—♦—
With years we are detached from our tenacity of life by the gentle pressure of
recorded sorrows.—W. S. LANDOR.
—♦—

UPON minds leavened with ignorance, and hands stained by crime, sentence of death falls, so far as we know, with a dead weight, the full burden of which is never at the moment accurately ascertained, because of its benumbing power; but the effect is generally to produce, in the first instance, either an obstinate sullenness or a hardened levity. Afterwards complete isolation of the condemned man from his companions in guilt, and from worldly influences of any sort; the daily interview with the minister of religion, and, perhaps, more than all, the absolute and crushing certainty that *so it must be*—these things combined commonly bring about, in a very short space of time, a palpable change of demeanour. In the majority of cases some sort of confession is made, and penitence and resignation are exhibited in a greater or lesser degree.

The case of an innocent man suddenly and wrongfully condemned to die by a judicial tribunal, is of a widely different kind. Such things have occurred times uncounted in all ages; and so long as human justice is imperfect, human passion strong, and human ignorance great, they must and will occur. The sense of grievous wrong endured, which is surely created in the minds of men so condemned, generates an amount of indifference to, or contempt for, the world's opinion, which prevents them taking any further thought or endeavour to enlighten or change that opinion. Like St. Paul, they are not careful to justify themselves, and they show this best not by their speech, but by their silence. What is chiefly noteworthy respecting them is the gentle, patient, and courageous frame of mind generally evinced by them. In the first place they are and must be greatly sustained by conscious rectitude; and along with the stern experience of man's injustice, comes also the conviction of man's impotency. His body men's hands may indeed destroy—they can neither touch his past life, nor affect his future destiny; and profound resignation follows the dawning belief that it is better to fall into the hands of God than of man.

"For neither will Melitus nor Anytus harm me, nor have they the power, for I do not think that it is possible for a better man to be injured by a worse," says the noble Athenian. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," were the dying words of the martyr Stephen, and though approaching in various degrees of nearness to this standard of thought, it is certain that such has been the spirit of most of those who have been killed for offences of which they were unquestionably innocent.

So far a records treat concerning them, there is little to tell either of violent and recriminatory speech, or servile and abject supplication.

But how is it when without conviction—without even challenge or warning, and upon a person not only innocent and unsuspecting, but unaccused—sentence of death is recorded by one of those who are, as we are taught to think, specially commissioned to guard mortality, and to stand between Death and his victim? A man goes into the consulting-room of a physician, a little ailing, as he himself acknowledges; he comes out at the end of a quarter of an hour, but during those few minutes sentence of death has been recorded. The sky still bends over him, and the sun shines as it did before; men pass and repass him by unnoticed; he is to them the same as he was the day or the hour before. The man is outwardly the same, and yet altogether changed from that time. Then come to him in quick succession sensations altogether new and strange. He has no indecision about facing this sudden horror, for *that* would imply the possibility of escape, or even of feeble defiance, and hope of that kind he has none; but in view, and in near view of the fast approaching peril, comes the irresistible craving for some wild excitement, some prodigious physical exertion, some desperate contest by which the mind should become inured to the nearness of death, or thought itself be mastered by fatigue. The immediate effect of a sudden sentence of this kind is to confuse and confound, not the one who pronounces it, but the person that receives it; for of all the vast group of up-turned faces at an execution, it is only the man about to die who cannot see the sharp gleam of the axe as it falls upon him, and he who stands closest to the death-bell hears least distinctly the message it gives, while far off the tones ring with a sad and sweet clearness in the ears of the listeners.

With those whose nearest and ultimate consolation has always been found in books or their pen, after the first great shock there is often experienced an intense fervid desire to concentrate all their doomed faculties on some particular aim or work which they yearn to accomplish before they go, and to make that *which they* know to be their final effort also their most excellent and best, so that their last deeds shall be accounted honourable, their last counsels of "heroic wisdom set to perfect words." We can hardly tell how often a secret knowledge of this kind has been the real source of the eloquence which is so penetrative and sympathetic in spirit as to astonish men by the light which it casts on the hidden workings of the human heart.

To a sanguine, hopeful temperament, the blow is perhaps the most overwhelming at the moment, and yet the most quietly and peacefully accepted at last; but where a regretful, casuistical, and conscientious mind is combined with an earnest and inflexible spirit, there arise reactionary perplexities, fears, and doubts, which often severely harass the man whose span of life is so swiftly closing in. Unquestionably, there are natures endowed with a faculty of such singular precognition in human affairs, that they literally foresee, that is, they arrive at conclusions, not

by aid of reason and calculation, but by absolute prescience, as if gifted with the second-sight. Just as a man by daylight recognizes at once his own reflection in a mirror, whereas, in darkness, he would with difficulty, and by groping, as it were, in his memory, recall, one by one, his own particular features, and so, slowly and step by step, attains to a recollection of the sort of appearance he generally presented. Men thus endowed are generally of a nature at once apprehensive, regretful, and resolute; and of them it may truly be affirmed that they die a thousand times before they die, and suffer every pain many times over in anticipation, and tenfold in actual amount of agony. Change is strong, but habit is stronger, and he cannot cast the one for the other, as he would his raiment. Apprehensive, I have said. Much to do, and so little time left me to do it, is the burden of his thought: "If such a combination should now turn out ill or differently to what I expect, if all I have reason to rely on should fail me in the critical time, how then? what to do? Is there one possible contingency I have not mentally confronted? If so, what is it?" This is what he says or thinks. Regretful: "This I might have foreseen, that I might have prevented, a word more here, many words less or different there, and this or that misery would never have been." Resolute: "So it shall be, in such a way and no other will I act—it is my fixed purpose from which I will not swerve." Vain words! vain hopes! and even, as they pass through his brain, he knows them to be so. But, in the presence of a silent, near, and resistless danger, thoughts, questions, and answers like these succeed each other with bewildering confusion; yet in all this dark sea of sadness, rarely does one doubt suggest itself as to the actual truth of a verdict, which is instinctively felt to be recorded by a tribunal more than human, and which man may neither set aside nor alter.

Often an intense momentary longing is experienced to bid farewell in some sort to all that he has loved best, he yearns to touch and retouch every familiar hand and thing, to see once again each face or scene that has been held dear; but, in the very midst of it, the sentence recorded recurs to memory, and colour and warmth fade swiftly from his wishes—"desire fails" when the world and the things of the world grow shadowy and dim.

Then follows perhaps, for a brief instant, a frenzied beseeching, or a mortal anguish, and then—a great calm, and sometimes an immunity from even the fear of dissolution; for our spirit becomes dominant as our body grows cold and helpless, and the frosts of death, as they creep through the dying nerves, paralyze the hand and tongue, but not the soul. During this ordeal, the conscience is purified as by fire, and the nature even of a very secretive man will become of a transparent truthfulness. There is a certain fruit known, I think, as the Siberian glass apple, which, as it ripens, increases in a pellucid clearness, until, just before it falls from the tree, it appears as though it were enclosed in crystal. In this way death purges the soul of deceits. With such a narrow margin of time to work in, what is there worth a lie or an unkind word? The worst nature is

slow to take offence on the eve of a long journey; and it is hard to say how much we cannot forgive when we are quite sure that we are near our final moment. For death is a potent spell, and in its shadow the querulous grow patient, the rough man gentle, and those who never before consulted pleasure other than their own become painfully anxious to spare the labour of others, so that the many trifling offices which the hand of love only can perform may be as few and light as possible. Illness takes away or adds to the poetry of death accordingly as it is borne—sadly, murmuringly, or heroically. It is one of the most pathetic circumstances attendant on such changes, that natural affection is thereby so much deepened as greatly to multiply the pangs of dissolution; and yet, that the last-named, being twofold in their nature, should be experienced in a proportion comparatively infinitesimal by the one most nearly concerned. The full severity of the physical pain he must bear; *that* the watcheis can neither prevent nor take away; but, by the operation of a most merciful law, they may and do vicariously endure most of the mental suffering.

And so approaches the last act of the drama, the prologue only of which was spoken in the consulting-room of the physician.

But how if at the very instant that such condemnation was recorded, a reprieve was born, not into the world, but into the knowledge of man, and a discovery till then unheralded by science, was destined to come from out the actual darkness into the light. A respite, startling by its unexpectedness, is at once granted—qualified indeed so that upon certain conditions of observance and abstinence—by an especial control of emotions and passions, the progress of a malady held to be of all others most fatal in its nature should be arrested, and not death in the future, but the present terror of death, or at least of sudden death, should fade away.

Such cases do unquestionably occur, and are likely to do so in increased proportion as time rolls on, until it seems not unreasonable to hope that gradually there will be no such thing as any one disease for which there is neither alleviation nor cure. Precisely as in comparison with the old modes of locomotion, the swiftness of railway travelling involves a danger more absolute and widely destructive to life and limb, so does the high pressure of civilization draw on the constitution and nervous force of man in a greater and more terrible excess. But the effect of civilization is not only more disease, but more science to meet disease, and the poison and the antidote go hand in hand. Whether the discovery of remedies will keep pace with the number and variety of maladies, it would be hazardous to pronounce. It is certain that all misery and every disease are caused by our running counter to God's laws. Had we knowledge to understand and wisdom to obey, we might live happy and sinless lives, and die of the natural exhaustion of old age. It is said of the Laps that, uncleanly and uncivilized as they are, judging them by the European standard, they yet in their lives follow so implicitly the laws of their condition, and do so with such hearty content, that they know no disease but old age, and when they take to their beds, it is to

the bed of death. I have heard of men thus sentenced and reprieved almost as strangely affected by the sudden restoration of hope as by the previous announcement of impending death. For a man to have been thus situated by no means implies a mistake on the part of the physician. "I can give you honestly no prospect of victory or even of a long struggle with your malady," the latter will say; "it is one for which our art knows *no* cure and little alleviation." And in a little while he may be able to assert truthfully, "I can now bid you hope, a remedy has been found, and the disease so long thought incurable, can be arrested, though not rooted out. By such means as I will indicate, and vigilant and unceasing care in the use of them, you may yet live and not die."

Then as the warm flush of confidence steals and circulates along the limbs frozen by fear, there comes a vivid sense of peril postponed but not escaped, and a passionate desire to purify the new-found happiness, and cleanse the future from the very shadow of self-reproach. A good man with the knowledge that his tenure of life is still uncertain in a sense far beyond that in which the phrase is usually employed, acquires almost insensibly a tenderness of heart, a constant charity, and a disposition to exaggerate no faults but his own. I can conceive of no more mighty privilege falling to any man than this, to have experienced the bitterness of death and from it to be recalled to life, to learn so quickly that disciplined knowledge which is of all others the most actual, intimate and powerful, and habitually to feel that chastened awe which is wholly without alloy of ignoble terror.

Any careful observer will have had occasion to remark how quickly refined and spiritualized the countenance becomes of one who habitually, in his own secret thought, anticipates death without dread as without defiance. And of this, the most touching outward sign, and one of itself, to the eye of the experienced physician, diagnostic of disease bound but not destroyed, baffled but not conquered, is that wistful, patient, far-off look in the eyes which so certainly speaks of long contemplation of the silent land. Not from death, not even from sudden death, but from unprepared death, may we all be delivered.

We no longer toll the passing bell in our land for the dying—as the tree falls so it must lie, is the stern verdict of a protesting faith. No duty sought out and fulfilled, no supererogation of good deeds to the account of the dead; no additional prayers, prolonged vigils, no penance, mental or bodily, on the part of the living, can avail to lessen regrets or smooth the path of the departed. But not the less the passing bell sounds in our hearts, yet, as one by one they pass forward alone and undismayed into the mists of death, the truth dawns faintly on our minds, that if, in our petitions for the enemy to spare us, we, Tithonus-like, were to be cursed by a granted prayer, and lose the ultimate hope that we too might one day die, no greater calamity could be imagined for any human being. "Power to die disproveth right to grieve." Death is even a better gift than life, and *abit ad plures* is often the happiest thing that can be said of any man.

The Small House at Allington.

CHAPTER LV.

NOT VERY FIE FIE AFTER ALL.

It will perhaps be remembered that terrible things had been foretold as about to happen between the Hartletop and Omnium families. Lady Dumbello had smiled whenever Mr. Plantagenet Palliser had spoken to her. Mr. Palliser had confessed to himself that politics were not enough for him, and that Love was necessary to make up the full complement of his happiness. Lord Dumbello had frowned latterly when his eyes fell on the tall figure of the duke's heir; and the duke himself,—that potentate, generally so mighty in his silence,—the duke himself had spoken. Lady De Courcy and Lady Clandidlem were, both of them, absolutely certain that the thing had been fully arranged. I am, therefore, perfectly justified in stating that the world was talking about the loves,—the illicit loves,—of Mr. Palliser and Lady Dumbello.

And the talking of the world found its way down to that respectable country parsonage in which Lady Dumbello had been born, and from which she had been taken away to those noble halls which she now graced by her presence. The talking of the world was heard at Plumstead Episcopi, where still lived Archdeacon Grantly, the lady's father; and was heard also at the deanery of Barchester, where lived the lady's aunt and grandfather. By whose ill-mannered tongue the rumour was spread in these ecclesiastical regions it boots not now to tell. But it may be remembered that Courcy Castle was not far from Barchester, and that Lady De Courcy was not given to hide her lights under a bushel.

It was a terrible rumour. To what mother must not such a rumour respecting her daughter be very terrible? In no mother's ears could it have sounded more frightfully than it did in those of Mrs. Grantly. Lady Dumbello, the daughter, might be altogether worldly; but Mrs. Grantly had never been more than half worldly. In one moiety of her character, her habits, and her desires, she had been wedded to things good in themselves,—to religion, to charity, and to honest-hearted uprightness. It is true that the circumstances of her life had induced her to serve both God and Mammon, and that, therefore, she had gloried greatly in the marriage of her daughter with the heir of a marquis. She had revelled in the aristocratic elevation of her child, though she continued to dispense books and catechisms with her own hands to the children of the labourers

of Plumstead Episcopi. When Griselda had first become Lady Dumbello the mother feared somewhat lest her child should find herself unequal to the exigencies of her new position. But the child had proved herself more than equal to them, and had mounted up to a dizzy height of success, which brought to the mother great glory and great fear also. She delighted to think that her Griselda was great even among the daughters of marquises; but she trembled as she reflected how deadly would be the fall from such a height—should there ever be a fall!

But she had never dreamed of such a fall as this! She would have said,—indeed, she often had said,—to the archdeacon that Griselda's religious principles were too firmly fixed to be moved by outward worldly matters; signifying, it may be, her conviction that that teaching of Plumstead Episcopi had so fastened her daughter into a groove, that all the future teaching of Hartlebury would not suffice to undo the fastenings. When she had thus boasted no such idea as that of her daughter running from her husband's house had ever come upon her; but she had alluded to vices of a nature kindred to that vice,—to vices into which other aristocratic ladies sometimes fell, who had been less firmly grooved; and her boasting had amounted to this,—that she herself had so successfully served God and Mammon together, that her child might go forth and enjoy all worldly things without risk of damage to things heavenly. Then came upon her this rumour. The archdeacon told her in a hoarse whisper that he had been recommended to look to it, that it was current through the world that Griselda was about to leave her husband.

"Nothing on earth shall make me believe it," said Mrs. Grantly. But she sat alone in her drawing-room afterwards and trembled. Then came her sister, Mrs. Arabin, the dean's wife, over to the parsonage, and in half-hidden words told the same story. She had heard it from Mrs. Proudie, the bishop's wife. "That woman is as false as the father of falsehoods," said Mrs. Grantly. But she trembled the more; and as she prepared her parish work, could think of nothing but her child. What would be all her life to come, what would have been all that was past of her life, if this thing should happen to her? She would not believe it; but yet she trembled the more as she thought of her daughter's exaltation, and remembered that such things had been done in that world to which Griselda now belonged. Ah! would it not have been better for them if they had not raised their heads so high! And she walked out alone among the tombs of the neighbouring churchyard, and stood over the grave in which had been laid the body of her other daughter. Could it be that the fate of that one had been the happier.

Very few words were spoken on the subject between her and the archdeacon, and yet it seemed agreed among them that something should be done. He went up to London, and saw his daughter,—not daring, however, to mention such a subject. Lord Dumbello was cross with him, and very uncommunicative. Indeed both the archdeacon and

Mrs. Grantly had found that their daughter's house was not comfortable to them, and as they were sufficiently proud among their own class they had not cared to press themselves on the hospitality of their son-in-law. But he had been able to perceive that all was not right in the house in Carlton Gardens. Lord Dumbello was not gracious with his wife, and there was something in the silence, rather than in the speech, of men, which seemed to justify the report which had reached him.

"He is there oftener than he should be," said the archdeacon. "And I am sure of this, at least, that Dumbello does not like it."

"I will write to her," said Mrs. Grantly at last. "I am still her mother;—I will write to her. It may be that she does not know what people say of her."

And Mrs. Grantly did write.

Plumstead, April, 186—

DEAREST GRISELDA,

It seems sometimes that you have been moved so far away from me that I have hardly a right to concern myself more in the affairs of your daily life, and I know that it is impossible that you should refer to me for advice or sympathy, as you would have done had you married some gentleman of our own standing. But I am quite sure that my child does not forget her mother, or fail to look back upon her mother's love; and that she will allow me to speak to her if she be in trouble, as I would to any other child whom I had loved and cherished. I pray God that I may be wrong in supposing that such trouble is near you. If I am so you will forgive me my solicitude.

Rumours have reached us from more than one quarter that—Oh! Griselda, I hardly know in what words to conceal and yet to declare that which I have to write. They say that you are intimate with Mr. Palliser, the nephew of the duke, and that your husband is much offended. Perhaps I had better tell you all, openly, cautioning you not to suppose that I have believed it. They say that it is thought that you are going to put yourself under Mr. Palliser's protection. My dearest child, I think you can imagine with what an agony I write these words,—with what terrible grief I must have been oppressed before I could have allowed myself to entertain the thoughts which have produced them. Such things are said openly in Barchester, and your father, who has been in town and has seen you, feels himself unable to tell me that my mind may be at rest.

I will not say to you a word as to the injury in a worldly point of view which would come to you from any rupture with your husband. I believe that you can see what would be the effect of so terrible a step quite as plainly as I can show it you. You would break the heart of your father, and send your mother to her grave;—but it is not even on that that I may most insist. It is this,—that you would offend your God by the worst sin that a woman can commit, and cast yourself into a depth of infamy in which repentance before God is almost impossible, and from which escape before man is not permitted.

I do not believe it, my dearest, dearest child,—my only living daughter; I do not believe what they have said to me. But as a mother I have not dared to leave the slander unnoticed. If you will write to me and say that it is not so, you will make me happy again, even though you should rebuke me for my suspicion.

Believe that at all times and under all circumstances, I am still your loving mother, as I was in other days.

SUSAN GRANTLY.

We will now go back to Mr. Palliser as he sat in his chambers at the Albany, thinking of his love. The duke had cautioned him, and the

duke's agent had cautioned him; and he, in spite of his high feeling of independence, had almost been made to tremble. All his thousands a year were in the balance, and perhaps also everything on which depended his position before the world. But, nevertheless, though he did tremble, he resolved to persevere. Statistics were becoming dry to him, and love was very sweet. Statistics, he thought, might be made as enchanting as ever, if only they could be mingled with love. The mere idea of loving Lady Dumbello had seemed to give a salt to his life of which he did not now know how to rob himself. It is true that he had not as yet enjoyed many of the absolute blessings of love, seeing that his conversations with Lady Dumbello had never been warmer than those which have been repeated in these pages; but his imagination had been at work; and now that Lady Dumbello was fully established at her house in Carlton Gardens, he was determined to declare his passion on the first convenient opportunity. It was sufficiently manifest to him that the world expected him to do so, and that the world was already a little disposed to find fault with the slowness of his proceedings.

He had been once at Carlton Gardens since the season had commenced, and the lady had favoured him with her sweetest smile. But he had only been half a minute alone with her, and during that half-minute had only time to remark that he supposed she would now remain in London for the season.

"Oh, yes," she had answered, "we shall not leave till July." Nor could he leave till July, because of the exigencies of his statistics. He therefore had before him two, if not three, clear months in which to manœuvre, to declare his purposes, and prepare for the future events of his life. As he resolved on a certain morning that he would say his first tender word to Lady Dumbello that very night, in the drawing-room of Lady De Courcy where he knew that he should meet her, a letter came to him by the post. He well knew the hand and the intimation which it would contain. It was from the duke's agent, Mr. Fothergill, and informed him that a certain sum of money had been placed to his credit at his banker's. But the letter went further, and informed him also that the duke had given his agent to understand that special instructions would be necessary before the next quarterly payment could be made. Mr. Fothergill said nothing further, but Mr. Palliser understood it all. He felt his blood run cold round his heart; but, nevertheless, he determined that he would not break his word to Lady De Courcy that night.

And Lady Dumbello received her letter also on the same morning. She was being dressed as she read it, and the maidens who attended her found no cause to suspect that anything in the letter had excited her ladyship. Her ladyship was not often excited, though she was vigilant in exacting from them their utmost cares. She read her letter, however, very carefully, and as she sat beneath the toilet implements of her maidens thought deeply of the tidings which had been brought to her. She was angry with no one;—she was thankful to no one. She felt no special love

for any person concerned in the matter. Her heart did not say, "Oh, my lord and husband!" or, "Oh, my lover!" or, "Oh, my mother, the friend of my childhood!" But she became aware that matter for thought had been brought before her, and she did think. "Send my love to Lord Dumbello," she said, when the operations were nearly completed, "and tell him that I shall be so glad to see him if he will come to me while I am at breakfast."

"Yes, my lady." And then the message came back: "His lordship would be with her ladyship certainly."

"Gustavus," she said, as soon as she had seated herself discreetly in her chair, "I have had a letter from my mother, which you had better read;" and she handed to him the document. "I do not know what I have done to deserve such suspicions from her; but she lives in the country, and has probably been deceived by ill-natured people. At any rate you must read it, and tell me what I should do."

We may predicate from this that Mr. Palliser's chance of being able to shipwreck himself upon that rock was but small, and that he would, in spite of himself, be saved from his uncle's anger. Lord Dumbello took the letter and read it very slowly, standing, as he did so, with his back to the fire. He read it very slowly, and his wife, though she never turned her face directly upon his, could perceive that he became very red, that he was fluttered and put beyond himself, and that his answer was not ready. She was well aware that his conduct to her during the last three months had been much altered from his former usages; that he had been rougher with her in his speech when alone, and less courteous in his attention when in society; but she had made no complaint or spoken a word to show him that she had marked the change. She had known, moreover, the cause of his altered manner, and having considered much, had resolved that she would live it down. She had declared to herself that she had done no deed and spoken no word that justified suspicion, and therefore she would make no change in her ways, or show herself to be conscious that she was suspected. But now,—having her mother's letter in her hand,—she could bring him to an explanation without making him aware that she had ever thought that he had been jealous of her. To her, her mother's letter was a great assistance. It justified a scene like this, and enabled her to fight her battle after her own fashion. As for eloping with any Mr. Palliser, and giving up the position which she had won;—no, indeed! She had been fastened in her grooves too well for that! Her mother, in entertaining any fear on such a subject, had shown herself to be ignorant of the solidity of her daughter's character.

"Well, Gustavus," she said at last. "You must say what answer I shall make, or whether I shall make any answer." But he was not even yet ready to instruct her. So he unfolded the letter and read it again, and she poured out for herself a cup of tea.

"It's a very serious matter," said he.

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"Yes, it is serious; I could not but think such a letter from my mother to be serious. Had it come from any one else I doubt whether I should have troubled you; unless, indeed, it had been from any as near to you as she is to me. As it is, you cannot but feel that I am right."

"Right! Oh, yes, you are right,—quite right to tell me; you should tell me everything. D—— them!" But whom he meant to condemn he did not explain.

"I am above all things averse to cause you trouble," she said. "I have seen some little things of late—"

"Has he ever said anything to you?"

"Who,—Mr. Palliser? Never a word."

"He has hinted at nothing of this kind?"

"Never a word. Had he done so, I must have made you understand that he could not have been allowed again into my drawing-room." Then again he read the letter, or pretended to do so.

"Your mother means well," he said.

"Oh, yes, she means well. She has been foolish to believe the tittle-tattle that has reached her,—very foolish to oblige me to give you this annoyance."

"Oh, as for that, I'm not annoyed. By Jove, no. Come, Griselda, let us have it all out; other people have said this, and I have been unhappy. Now, you know it all."

"Have I made you unhappy?"

"Well, no; not you. Don't be hard upon me when I tell you the whole truth. Fools and brutes have whispered things that have vexed me. They may whisper till the devil fetches them, but they shan't annoy me again. Give me a kiss, my girl." And he absolutely put out his arms and embraced her. "Write a good-natured letter to your mother, and ask her to come up for a week in May. That'll be the best thing; and then she'll understand. By Jove, it's twelve o'clock. Good-by."

Lady Dumbello was well aware that she had triumphed, and that her mother's letter had been invaluable to her. But it had been used, and therefore she did not read it again. She ate her breakfast in quiet comfort, looking over a milliner's French circular as she did so; and then, when the time for such an operation had fully come, she got to her writing-table and answered her mother's letter.

DEAR MAMMA (she said),

I THOUGHT it best to show your letter at once to Lord Dumbello. He said that people would be ill-natured, and seemed to think that the telling of such stories could not be helped. As regards you, he was not a bit angry, but said that you and papa had better come to us for a week about the end of next month. Do come. We are to have rather a large dinner-party on the 23rd. His Royal Highness is coming, and I think papa would like to meet him. Have you observed that those very high bonnets have all gone out: I never liked them; and as I had got a hint from Paris, I have been doing my best to put them down. I do hope nothing will prevent your coming.

Your affectionate daughter,

Carlton Gardens, Wednesday.

G. DUMBELLO.

Mrs. Grantly was aware, from the moment in which she received the letter, that she had wronged her daughter by her suspicions. It did not occur to her to disbelieve a word that was said in the letter, or an inference that was implied. She had been wrong, and rejoiced that it was so. But nevertheless there was that in the letter which annoyed and irritated her, though she could not explain to herself the cause of her annoyance. She had thrown all her heart into that which she had written, but in the words which her child had written not a vestige of heart was to be found. In that reconciling of God and Mammon which Mrs. Grantly had carried on so successfully in the education of her daughter the organ had not been required, and had become withered, if not defunct, through want of use.

"We will not go there, I think," said Mrs. Grantly, speaking to her husband.

"Oh, dear, no; certainly not. If you want to go to town at all, I will take rooms for you. And as for his Royal Highness——! I have a great respect for his Royal Highness, but I do not in the least desire to meet him at Dumbello's table."

And so that matter was settled, as regarded the inhabitants of Plumstead Episcopi.

And whither did Lord Dumbello betake himself when he left his wife's room in so great a hurry at twelve o'clock? Not to the Park, nor to Tattersall's, nor to a committee-room of the House of Commons, nor yet to the bow-window of his club. But he went straight to a great jeweller's in Ludgate-hill, and there purchased a wonderful green necklace, very rare and curious, heavy with green sparkling drops, with three rows of shining green stones embedded in chaste gold,—a necklace amounting almost to a jewelled cuirass in weight and extent. It had been in all the exhibitions, and was very costly and magnificent. While Lady Dumbello was still dressing in the evening this was brought to her with her lord's love, as his token of renewed confidence; and Lady Dumbello, as she counted the sparkles, triumphed inwardly, telling herself that she had played her cards well.

But while she counted the sparkles produced by her full reconciliation with her lord, poor Plantagenet Palliser was still trembling in his ignorance. If only he could have been allowed to see Mrs. Grantly's letter, and the lady's answer, and the lord's present! But no such seeing was vouchsafed to him, and he was carried off in his brougham to Lady De Courcy's house, twittering with expectant love, and trembling with expectant ruin. To this conclusion he had come at any rate, that if anything was to be done, it should be done now. He would speak a word of love, and prepare his future in accordance with the acceptance it might receive.

Lady De Courcy's rooms were very crowded when he arrived there. It was the first great crushing party of the season, and all the world had been collected into Portman Square. Lady De Courcy was smiling as

though her lord had no teeth, as though her eldest son's condition was quite happy, and all things were going well with the De Courcy interests. Lady Margareta was there behind her, bland without and bitter within; and Lady Rosina also, at some further distance, reconciled to this world's vanity and finery because there was to be no dancing. And the married daughters of the house were there also, striving to maintain their positions on the strength of their undoubted birth, but subjected to some snubbing by the lowness of their absolute circumstances. Gazebee was there, happy in the absolute fact of his connection with an earl, and blessed with the consideration that was extended to him as an earl's son-in-law. And Crosbie, also, was in the rooms,—was present there, though he had sworn to himself that he would no longer dance attendance on the countess, and that he would sever himself away from the wretchedness of the family. But if he gave up them and their ways, what else would then be left to him? He had come, therefore, and now stood alone, sullen, in a corner, telling himself that all was vanity. Yes; to the vain all will be vanity; and to the poor of heart all will be poor.

Lady Dumbello was there in a small inner room, seated on a couch to which she had been brought on her first arrival at the house, and on which she would remain till she departed. From time to time some very noble or very elevated personage would come before her and say a word, and she would answer that elevated personage with another word; but nobody had attempted with her the task of conversation. It was understood that Lady Dumbello did not converse,—unless it were occasionally with Mr. Palliser.

She knew well that Mr. Palliser was to meet her there. He had told her expressly that he should do so, having inquired, with much solicitude, whether she intended to obey the invitation of the countess. "I shall probably be there," she had said, and now had determined that her mother's letter and her husband's conduct to her should not cause her to break her word. Should Mr. Palliser "forget" himself, she would know how to say a word to him as she had known how to say a word to her husband. Forget himself! She was very sure that Mr. Palliser had been making up his mind to forget himself for some months past.

He did come to her, and stood over her looking unutterable things. His unutterable things, however, were so looked, that they did not absolutely demand notice from the lady. He did not sigh like a furnace, nor open his eyes upon her as though there were two suns in the firmament above her head, nor did he beat his breast or tear his hair. Mr. Palliser had been brought up in a school which delights in tranquillity, and never allows its pupils to commit themselves either to the sublime or to the ridiculous. He did look an unutterable thing or two; but he did it with so decorous an eye, that the lady, who was measuring it all with great accuracy, could not, as yet, declare that Mr. Palliser had "forgotten himself."

There was room by her on the couch, and once or twice, at Hartlebury, he had ventured so to seat himself. On the present occasion, however, he could not do so without placing himself manifestly on her dress. She would have known how to fill a larger couch even than that,—as she would have known, also, how to make room,—had it been her mind to do so. So he stood still over her, and she smiled at him. Such a smile! It was cold as death, flattering no one, saying nothing, hideous in its unmeaning, unreal grace. Ah! how I hate the smile of a woman who smiles by rote! It made Mr. Palliser feel very uncomfortable;—but he did not analyze it, and persevered.

"Lady Dumbello," he said, and his voice was very low, "I have been looking forward to meeting you here."

"Have you, Mr. Palliser? Yes; I remember that you asked me whether I was coming."

"I did. Hm—Lady Dumbello!" and he almost trenched upon the outside verge of that schooling which had taught him to avoid both the sublime and the ridiculous. But he had not forgotten himself as yet, and so she smiled again.

"Lady Dumbello, in this world in which we live it is so hard to get a moment in which we can speak." He had thought that she would move her dress, but she did not.

"Oh, I don't know," she said; "one doesn't often want to say very much, I think."

"Ah, no; not often, perhaps. But when one does want! How I do hate these crowded rooms!" Yet, when he had been at Hartlebury he had resolved that the only ground for him would be the crowded drawing-room of some large London house. "I wonder whether you ever desire anything beyond them?"

"Oh, yes," said she; "but I confess that I am fond of parties."

Mr. Palliser looked around and thought that he saw that he was unobserved. He had made up his mind as to what he would do, and he was determined to do it. He had in him none of that readiness which enables some men to make love and carry off their Dulcineas at a moment's notice, but he had that pluck which would have made himself disgraceful in his own eyes if he omitted to do that as to the doing of which he had made a solemn resolution. He would have preferred to do it sitting, but, *faute de mieux*, seeing that a seat was denied to him, he would do it standing.

"Griselda," he said,—and it must be admitted that his tone was not bad. The word sank softly into her ear, like small rain upon moss, and it sank into no other ear. "Griselda!"

"Mr. Palliser!" said she;—and though she made no scene, though she merely glanced upon him once, he could see that he was wrong.

"May I not call you so?"

"Certainly not. Shall I ask you to see if my people are there?" He stood a moment before her hesitating. "My carriage, I mean." As she

gave the command she glanced at him again, and then he obeyed her orders.

When he returned she had left her seat; but he heard her name announced on the stairs, and caught a glance of the back of her head as she made her way gracefully down through the crowd. He never attempted to make love to her again, utterly disappointing the hopes of Lady De Courcy, Mrs. Proudie, and Lady Clandidlem.

As I would wish those who are interested in Mr. Palliser's fortunes to know the ultimate result of this adventure, and as we shall not have space to return to his affairs in this little history, I may, perhaps, be allowed to press somewhat forward, and tell what Fortune did for him before the close of that London season. Everybody knows that in that spring Lady Glencora MacCluskie was brought out before the world, and it is equally well known that she, as the only child of the late Lord of the Isles, was the great heiress of the day. It is true that the hereditary possession of Skye, Staffa, Mull, Arran, and Bute went, with the title, to the Marquis of Auldreekie, together with the counties of Caithness and Ross-shire. But the property in Fife, Aberdeen, Perth, and Kincardineshire, comprising the greater part of those counties, and the coal-mines in Lanark, as well as the enormous estate within the city of Glasgow, were unentailed, and went to the Lady Glencora. She was a fair girl, with bright blue eyes and short wavy flaxen hair, very soft to the eye. The Lady Glencora was small in stature, and her happy round face lacked, perhaps, the highest grace of female beauty. But there was ever a smile upon it, at which it was very pleasant to look; and the intense interest with which she would dance, and talk, and follow up every amusement that was offered her, was very charming. The horse she rode was the dearest love;—oh! she loved him so dearly! And she had a little dog that was almost as dear as the horse. The friend of her youth, Sabrina Scott, was—oh, such a girl! And her cousin, the little Lord of the Isles, the heir of the marquis, was so gracious and beautiful that she was always covering him with kisses. Unfortunately he was only six, so that there was hardly a possibility that the properties should be brought together.

But Lady Glencora, though she was so charming, had even in this, her first outset upon the world, given great uneasiness to her friends and caused the Marquis of Auldreekie to be almost wild with dismay. There was a terribly handsome man about town, who had spent every shilling that anybody would give him, who was very fond of brandy, who was known, but not trusted, at Newmarket, who was said to be deep in every vice, whose father would not speak to him;—and with him the Lady Glencora was never tired of dancing. One morning she had told her cousin the marquis, with a flashing eye,—for the round blue eye could flash,—that Burgo Fitzgerald was more sinned against than sinning. Ah me! what was a guardian marquis, anxious for the fate of the family property, to do under such circumstances as that?

But before the end of the season the marquis and the duke were both happy men, and we will hope that the Lady Glencora also was satisfied. Mr. Plantagenet Palliser had danced with her twice, and had spoken his mind. He had an interview with the marquis, which was pre-eminently satisfactory, and everything was settled. Glencora no doubt told him how she had accepted that plain gold ring from Burgo Fitzgerald, and how she had restored it; but I doubt whether she ever told him of that wavy lock of golden hair which Burgo still keeps in his receptacle for such treasures.

"Plantagenet," said the duke, with quite unaccustomed warmth, "in this, as in all things, you have shown yourself to be everything that I could desire. I have told the marquis that Matching Priory, with the whole estate, should be given over to you at once. It is the most comfortable country-house I know. Glencora shall have The Horns as her wedding present."

But the genial, frank delight of Mr. Fothergill pleased Mr. Palliser the most. The heir of the Pallisers had done his duty, and Mr. Fothergill was unfeignedly a happy man.

CHAPTER LVI.

SHOWING HOW MR. CROSBIE BECAME AGAIN A HAPPY MAN.

It has been told in the last chapter how Lady De Courcy gave a great party in London in the latter days of April, and it may therefore be thought that things were going well with the De Courcys; but I fear the inference would be untrue. At any rate, things were not going well with Lady Alexandrina, for she, on her mother's first arrival in town, had rushed to Portman-square with a long tale of her sufferings.

"Oh, mamma! you would not believe it; but he hardly ever speaks to me."

"My dear, there are worse faults in a man than that."

"I am alone there all the day. I never get out. He never offers to get me a carriage. He asked me to walk with him once last week, when it was raining. I saw that he waited till the rain began. Only think, I have not been out three evenings this month,—except to Amelia's; and now he says he won't go there any more, because a fly is so expensive. You can't believe how uncomfortable the house is."

"I thought you chose it, my dear."

"I looked at it, but, of course, I didn't know what a house ought to be. Amelia said it wasn't nice, but he would have it. He hates Amelia. I'm sure of that, for he says everything he can to snub her and Mr. Gazebee. Mr. Gazebee is as good as he, at any rate. What do you think? He has given Richard warning to go. You never saw him, but he was a very good servant. He has given him warning, and he is not

talking of getting another man. I won't live with him without somebody to wait upon me."

" My dearest girl, do not think of such a thing as leaving him."

" But I will think of it, mamma. You do not know what my life is in that house. He never speaks to me,—never. He comes home before dinner at half-past six, and when he has just shown himself he goes to his dressing-room. He is always silent at dinner-time, and after dinner he goes to sleep. He breakfasts always at nine, and goes away at half-past nine, though I know he does not get to his office till eleven. If I want anything, he says that it cannot be afforded. I never thought before that he was stingy, but I am sure now that he must be a miser at heart."

" It is better so than a spendthrift, Alexandrina."

" I don't know that it is better. He could not make me more unhappy than I am. Unhappy is no word for it. What can I do shut up in such a house as that by myself from nine o'clock in the morning till six in the evening? Everybody knows what he is, so that nobody will come to see me. I tell you fairly, mamma, I will not stand it. If you cannot help me, I will look for help elsewhere."

It may, at any rate, be said that things were not going well with that branch of the De Courcy family. Nor, indeed, was it going well with some other branches. Lord Porlock had married, not having selected his partner for life from the choicest cream of the aristocratic circles, and his mother, while endeavouring to say a word in his favour, had been so abused by the earl that she had been driven to declare that she could no longer endure such usage. She had come up to London in direct opposition to his commands, while he was fastened to his room by gout; and had given her party in defiance of him, so that people should not say, when her back was turned, that she had slunk away in despair.

" I have borne it," she said to Margaretta, " longer than any other woman in England would have done. While I thought that any of you would marry——"

" Oh, don't talk of that, mamma," said Margaretta, putting a little scorn into her voice. She had not been quite pleased that even her mother should intimate that all her chance was over, and yet she herself had often told her mother that she had given up all thought of marrying.

" Rosina will go to Amelia's," the countess continued; " Mr. Gazebee is quite satisfied that it should be so, and he will take care that she shall have enough to cover her own expenses. I propose that you and I, dear, shall go to Baden-Baden."

" And about money, mamma ? "

" Mr. Gazebee must manage it. In spite of all that your father says, I know that there must be money. The expense will be much less so than in our present way."

" And what will papa do himself?"

"I cannot help it, my dear. No one knows what I have had to bear. Another year of it would kill me. His language has become worse and worse, and I fear every day that he is going to strike me with his crutch."

Under all these circumstances it cannot be said that the De Courcy interests were prospering.

But Lady De Courcy, when she had made up her mind to go to Baden-Baden, had by no means intended to take her youngest daughter with her. She had endured for years, and now Alexandrina was unable to endure for six months. Her chief grievance, moreover, was this,—that her husband was silent. The mother felt that no woman had a right to complain much of any such sorrow as that. If her earl had sinned only in that way, she would have been content to have remained by him till the last!

And yet I do not know whether Alexandrina's life was not quite as hard as that of her mother. She barely exceeded the truth when she said that he never spoke to her. The hours with her in her new comfortless house were very long,—very long and very tedious. Marriage with her had by no means been the thing that she had expected. At home, with her mother, there had always been people around her, but they had not always been such as she herself would have chosen for her companions. She had thought that, when married, she could choose and have those about her who were congenial to her; but she found that none came to her. Her sister, who was a wiser woman than she, had begun her married life with a definite idea, and had carried it out; but this poor creature found herself, as it were, stranded. When once she had conceived it in her heart to feel anger against her husband,—and she had done so before they had been a week together,—there was no love to bring her back to him again. She did not know that it behoved her to look pleased when he entered the room, and to make him at any rate think that his presence gave her happiness. She became gloomy before she reached her new house, and never laid her gloom aside. He would have made a struggle for some domestic comfort, had any seemed to be within his reach. As it was, he struggled for domestic propriety, believing that he might so best bolster up his present lot in life. But the task became harder and harder to him, and the gloom became denser and more dense. He did not think of her unhappiness, but of his own; as she did not think of his tedium, but of hers. "If this be domestic felicity!" he would say to himself, as he sat in his arm-chair, striving to fix his attention upon a book.

"If this be the happiness of married life!" she thought, as she remained listless, without even the pretence of a book, behind her teacups. In truth she would not walk with him, not caring for such exercise round the pavement of a London square; and he had resolutely determined that she should not run him into debt for carriage hire. He was not a curmudgeon with his money; he was no miser. But he had found that

in marrying an earl's daughter he had made himself a poor man, and he was resolved that he would not also be an embarrassed man.

When the bride heard that her mother and sister were about to escape to Baden-Baden, there rushed upon her a sudden hope that she might be able to accompany the flight. She would not be parted from her husband, or at least not so parted that the world should suppose that they had quarrelled. She would simply go away and make a long visit,—a very long visit. Two years ago a sojourn with her mother and Margaretta at Baden-Baden would not have offered to her much that was attractive; but now, in her eyes, such a life seemed to be a life in Paradise. In truth, the tedium of those hours in Princess Royal Crescent had been very heavy.

But how could she contrive that it should be so? That conversation with her mother had taken place on the day preceding the party, and Lady De Courcy had repeated it with dismay to Margaretta.

"Of course he would allow her an income," Margaretta had coolly said.

"But, my dear, they have been married only ten weeks."

"I don't see why anybody is to be made absolutely wretched because they are married," Margaretta answered. "I don't want to persuade her to leave him, but if what she says is true it must be very uncomfortable."

Crosbie had consented to go to the party in Portman-square, but had not greatly enjoyed himself on that festive occasion. He had stood about moodily, speaking hardly a word to any one. His whole aspect of life seemed to have been altered during the last few months. It was here, in such spots as this that he had been used to find his glory. On such occasions he had shone with a peculiar light, making envious the hearts of many who watched the brilliance of his career as they stood around in dull quiescence. But now no one in those rooms had been more dull, more silent, or less courted than he; and yet he was established there as the son-in-law of that, noble house. "Rather slow work; isn't it?" Gazebee had said to him, having, after many efforts, succeeded in reaching his brother-in-law in a corner. In answer to this Crosbie had only grunted. "As for myself," continued Gazebee, "I would a deal sooner be at home with my paper and slippers. It seems to me these sort of gatherings don't suit married men." Crosbie had again grunted, and had then escaped into another corner.

Crosbie and his wife went home together in a cab,—speechless both of them. Alexandrina hated cabs,—but she had been plainly told that in such vehicles, and in such vehicles only, could she be allowed to travel. On the following morning he was at the breakfast-table punctually by nine, but she did not make her appearance till after he had gone to his office. Soon after that, however, she was away to her mother and her sister; but she was seated grimly in her drawing-room when he came in to see her, on his return to his house. Having said some word which

might be taken for a greeting, he was about to retire; but she stopped him with a request that he would speak to her.

"Certainly," said he. "I was only going to dress. It is nearly the half-hour."

"I won't keep you very long, and if dinner is a few minutes late it won't signify. Mamma and Margaretta are going to Baden-Baden."

"To Baden-Baden, are they?"

"Yes; and they intend to remain there—for a considerable time." There was a little pause, and Alexandrina found it necessary to clear her voice and to prepare herself for further speech by a little cough. She was determined to make her proposition, but was rather afraid of the manner in which it might be first received.

"Has anything happened at Courcy Castle?" Crosbie asked.

"No; that is, yes; there may have been some words between papa and mamma; but I don't quite know. That, however, does not matter now. Mamma is going, and purposes to remain there for the rest of the year."

"And the house in town will be given up."

"I suppose so, but that will be as papa chooses. Have you any objection to my going with mamma?"

What a question to be asked by a bride of ten weeks' standing! She had hardly been above a month with her husband in her new house, and she was now asking permission to leave it, and to leave him also, for an indefinite number of months,—perhaps for ever. But she showed no excitement as she made her request. There was neither sorrow, nor regret, nor hope in her face. She had not put on half the animation which she had once assumed in asking for the use, twice a week, of a carriage done up to look as though it were her own private possession. Crosbie had then answered her with great sternness, and she had wept when his refusal was made certain to her. But there was to be no weeping now. She meant to go,—with his permission if he would accord it, and without it if he should refuse it. The question of money was no doubt important, but Gazebee should manage that,—as he managed all those things.

"Going with them to Baden-Baden?" said Crosbie. "For how long?"

"Well; it would be no use unless it were for some time."

"For how long a time do you mean, Alexandrina? Speak out what you really have to say. For a month?"

"Oh, more than that."

"For two months, or six, or as long as they may stay there?"

"We could settle that afterwards, when I am there." During all this time she did not once look into his face, though he was looking hard at her throughout.

"You mean," said he, "that you wish to go away from me."

"In one sense it would be going away, certainly."

"But in the ordinary sense? is it not so? When you talk of going

to Baden-Baden for an unlimited number of months, have you any idea of coming back again?"

"Back to London, you mean?"

"Back to me,—to my house,—to your duties as a wife! Why cannot you say at once what it is you want? You wish to be separated from me?"

"I am not happy here,—in this house."

"And who chose the house? Did I want to come here? But it is not that. If you are not happy here, what could you have in any other house to make you happy?"

"If you were left alone in this room for seven or eight hours at a time, without a soul to come to you, you would know what I mean. And even after that, it is not much better. You never speak to me when you are here."

"Is it my fault that nobody comes to you? The fact is, Alexandrina, that you will not reconcile yourself to the manner of life which is suitable to my income. You are wretched because you cannot have yourself driven round the Park. I cannot find you a carriage, and will not attempt to do so. You may go to Baden-Baden if you please;—that is, if your mother is willing to take you."

"Of course I must pay my own expenses," said Alexandrina. But to this he made no answer on the moment. As soon as he had given his permission he had risen from his seat and was going, and her last words only caught him in the doorway. After all, would not this be the cheapest arrangement that he could make? As he went through his calculations he stood up with his elbow on the mantelpiece in his dressing-room. He had scolded his wife because she had been unhappy with him; but had he not been quite as unhappy with her? Would it not be better that they should part in this quiet, half-unnoticed way;—that they should part and never again come together? He was lucky in this, that hitherto had come upon them no prospect of any little Crosbie to mar the advantages of such an arrangement. If he gave her four hundred a year, and allowed Gazebee two more towards the paying off of encumbrances, he would still have six on which to enjoy himself in London. Of course he could not live as he had lived in those happy days before his marriage, nor, independently of the cost, would such a mode of life be within his reach. But he might go to his club for his dinners; he might smoke his cigar in luxury; he would not be bound to that wooden home which, in spite of all his resolutions, had become almost unendurable to him. So he made his calculations, and found that it would be well that his bride should go. He would give over his house and furniture to Gazebee, allowing Gazebee to do as he would about that. To be once more a bachelor, in lodgings, with six hundred a year to spend on himself, seemed to him now such a prospect of happiness that he almost became light-hearted as he dressed himself. He would let her go to Baden-Baden.

There was nothing said about it at dinner, nor did he mention the subject again till the servant had left the tea-things on the drawing-room table. "You can go with your mother if you like it," he then said.

"I think it will be best," she answered.

"Perhaps it will. At any rate you shall suit yourself."

"And about money?"

"You had better leave me to speak to Gazebee about that."

"Very well. Will you have some tea?" And then the whole thing was finished.

On the next day she went after lunch to her mother's house, and never came back again to Princess Royal Crescent. During that morning she packed up those things which she cared to pack herself, and sent her sisters there, with an old family servant, to bring away whatever else might be supposed to belong to her. "Dear, dear," said Amelia, "what trouble I had in getting these things together for them, and only the other day. I can't but think she's wrong to go away."

"I don't know," said Margaretta. "She has not been so lucky as you have in the man she has married. I always felt that she would find it difficult to manage him."

"But, my dear, she has not tried. She has given up at once. It isn't management that was wanting. The fact is that when Alexandrina began she didn't make up her mind to the kind of thing she was coming to. I did. I knew it wasn't to be all party-going and that sort of thing. But I must own that Crosbie isn't the same sort of man as Mortimer. I don't think I could have gone on with him. You might as well have those small books put up; he won't care about them." And in this way Crosbie's house was dismantled.

She saw him no more, for he made no farewell visit to the house in Portman-square. A note had been brought to him at his office: "I am here with mamma, and may as well say good-by now. We start on Tuesday. If you wish to write, you can send your letters to the housekeeper here. I hope you will make yourself comfortable, and that you will be well. Yours affectionately, A. C." He made no answer to it, but went that day and dined at his club.

"I haven't seen you this age," said Montgomerie Dobbs.

"No. My wife is going abroad with her mother, and while she is away I shall come back here again."

There was nothing more said to him, and no one ever made any inquiry about his domestic affairs. It seemed to him now as though he had no friend sufficiently intimate with him to ask him after his wife or family. She was gone, and in a month's time he found himself again in Mount Street,—beginning the world with five hundred a year, not six. For Mr. Gazebee, when the reckoning came, showed him that a larger income at the present moment was not possible for him. The countess had for a long time refused to let Lady Alexandrina go with her on so

small a pittance as four hundred and fifty;—and then were there not the insurances to be maintained?

But I think he would have consented to accept his liberty with three hundred a year,—so great to him was the relief.

CHAPTER LVII.

LILIAN DALE VANQUISHES HER MOTHER.

MRS. DALE had been present during the interview in which John Eames had made his prayer to her daughter, but she had said little or nothing on that occasion. All her wishes had been in favour of the suitor, but she had not dared to express them, neither had she dared to leave the room. It had been hard upon him to be thus forced to declare his love in the presence of a third person, but he had done it, and had gone away with his answer. Then, when the thing was over, Lily, without any communion with her mother, took herself off, and was no more seen till the evening hours had come on, in which it was natural that they should be together again. Mrs. Dale, when thus alone, had been able to think of nothing but this new suit for her daughter's hand. If only it might be accomplished! If any words from her to Lily might be efficacious to such an end! And yet, hitherto, she had been afraid almost to utter a word.

She knew that it was very difficult. She declared to herself over and over that he had come too soon,—that the attempt had been made too quickly after that other shipwreck. How was it possible that the ship should put to sea again at once, with all her timbers so rudely strained? And yet, now that the attempt had been made, now that Eames had uttered his request and been sent away with an answer, she felt that she must at once speak to Lily on the subject, if ever she were to speak upon it. She thought that she understood her child and all her feelings. She recognized the violence of the shock which must be encountered before Lily could be brought to acknowledge such a change in her heart. But if the thing could be done, Lily would be a happy woman. When once done it would be in all respects a blessing. And if it were not done, might not Lily's life be blank, lonely, and loveless to the end? Yet when Lily came down in the evening, with some light, half-joking word on her lips, as was usual to her, Mrs. Dale was still afraid to venture upon her task.

"I suppose, mamma, we may consider it as a settled thing that everything must be again unpacked, and that the lodging scheme will be given up."

"I don't know that, my dear."

"Oh, but I do,—after what you said just now. What geese everybody will think us!"

"I shouldn't care a bit for that, if we didn't think ourselves geese, or if your uncle did not think us so."

"I believe he would think we were swans. If I had ever thought he would be so much in earnest about it, or that he would ever have cared about our being here, I would never have voted for going. But he is so strange. He is affectionate when he ought to be angry, and ill-natured when he ought to be gentle and kind."

"He has, at any rate, given us reason to feel sure of his affection."

"For us girls I never doubted it. But, mamma, I don't think I could face Mrs. Boyce. Mrs. Hearn and Mrs. Crump would be very bad, and Hopkins would come down upon us terribly when he found that we had given way. But Mrs. Boyce would be worse than any of them. Can't you fancy the tone of her congratulations?"

"I think I should survive Mrs. Boyce."

"Ah, yes; because we should have to go and tell her. I know your cowardice of old, mamma; don't I? And Bell wouldn't care a bit, because of her lover. Mrs. Boyce will be nothing to her. It is I that must bear it all. Well, I don't mind; I'll vote for staying if you will promise to be happy here. Oh, mamma, I'll vote for anything if you will be happy."

"And will you be happy?"

"Yes; as happy as the day is long. Only I know we shall never see Bell. People never do see each other when they live just at that distance. It's too near for long visits, and too far for short visits. I'll tell you what; we might make arrangements each to walk half-way, and meet at the corner of Lord De Guest's wood. I wonder whether they'd let us put up a seat there. I think we might have a little house and carry sandwiches and a bottle of beer. Couldn't we see something of each other in that way?"

Thus it came to be the fixed idea of both of them that they would abandon their plan of migrating to Guestwick, and on this subject they continued to talk over their tea-table; but on that evening Mrs. Dale ventured to say nothing about John Eames.

But they did not even yet dare to commence the work of reconstructing their old home. Bell must come back before they would do that, and the express assent of the squire must be formally obtained. Mrs. Dale must, in a degree, acknowledge herself to have been wrong, and ask to be forgiven for her contumacy.

"I suppose the three of us had better go up in sackcloth, and throw ashes on our foreheads as we meet Hopkins in the garden," said Lily, "and then I know he'll heap coals of fire on our heads by sending us an early dish of peas. And Dingles would bring us in a pheasant, only that pheasants don't grow in May."

"If the sackcloth doesn't take an unpleasanter shape than that, I shan't mind it."

"That's because you've got no delicate feelings. And then uncle Christopher's gratitude!"

"Ah! I shall feel that."

"But, mamma, we'll wait till Bell comes home. She shall decide. She is going away, and therefore she'll be free from prejudice. If uncle offers to paint the house,—and I know he will,—then I shall be humbled to the dust."

But yet Mrs. Dale had said nothing on the subject which was nearest to her heart. When Lily in pleasantry had accused her of cowardice, her mind had instantly gone off to that other matter, and she had told herself that she was a coward. Why should she be afraid of offering her counsel to her own child? It seemed to her as though she had neglected some duty in allowing Crosbie's conduct to have passed away without hardly a word of comment on it between herself and Lily. Should she not have forced upon her daughter's conviction the fact that Crosbie had been a villain, and as such should be discarded from her heart? As it was, Lily had spoken the simple truth when she told John Eames that she was dealing more openly with him on that affair of her engagement than she had ever dealt, even with her mother. Thinking of this as she sat in her own room that night before she allowed herself to rest, Mrs. Dale resolved that on the next morning she would endeavour to make Lily see as she saw and think as she thought.

She let breakfast pass by before she began her task, and even then she did not rush at it at once. Lily sat herself down to her work when the teacups were taken away, and Mrs. Dale went down to her kitchen as was her wont. It was nearly eleven before she seated herself in the parlour, and even then she got her work-box before her and took out her needle.

"I wonder how Bell gets on with Lady Julia," said Lily.

"Very well, I'm sure."

"Lady Julia won't bite her, I know, and I suppose her dismay at the tall footmen has passed off by this time."

"I don't know that they have any tall footmen."

"Short footmen then,—you know what I mean; all the noble belongings. They must startle one at first, I'm sure, let one determine over so much not to be startled. It's a very mean thing, no doubt, to be afraid of a lord merely because he is a lord; yet I'm sure I should be afraid at first, even of Lord De Guest, if I were staying in the house."

"It's well you didn't go, then."

"Yes, I think it is. Bell is of a firmer mind, and I dare say she'll get over it after the first day. But what on earth does she do there? I wonder whether they mend their stockings in such a house as that."

"Not in public, I should think."

"In very grand houses they throw them away at once, I suppose. I've often thought about it. Do you believe the Prime Minister ever has his shoes sent to a cobbler?"

"Perhaps a regular shoemaker will condescend to mend a Prime Minister's shoes."

"You think the are mended, then? But who orders it? Does he see

himself when there's a little hole coming, as I do? Does an archbishop allow himself so many pairs of gloves in a year?"

"Not very strictly, I should think."

"Then I suppose it comes to this, that he has a new pair whenever he wants them. But what constitutes the want? Does he ever say to himself that they'll do for another Sunday? I remember the bishop coming here once, and he had a hole at the end of his thumb. I was going to be confirmed, and I remember thinking that he ought to have been smarter."

"Why didn't you offer to mend it?"

"I shouldn't have dared for all the world."

The conversation had commenced itself in a manner that did not promise much assistance to Mrs. Dale's project. When Lily got upon any subject, she was not easily induced to leave it, and when her mind had twisted itself in one direction, it was difficult to untwist it. She was now bent on a consideration of the smaller social habits of the high and mighty among us, and was asking her mother whether she supposed that the royal children ever carried halfpence in their pockets, or descended so low as fourpenny-bits.

"I suppose they have pockets like other children," said Lily.

But her mother stopped her suddenly,

"Lily, dear, I want to say something to you about John Eames."

"Mamma, I'd sooner talk about the Royal Family just at present."

"But, dear, you must forgive me if I persist. I have thought much about it, and I'm sure you will not oppose me when I am doing what I think to be my duty."

"No, mamma; I won't oppose you, certainly."

"Since Mr. Crosbie's conduct was made known to you, I have mentioned his name in your hearing very seldom."

"No, mamma, you have not. And I have loved you so dearly for your goodness to me. Do not think that I have not understood and known how generous you have been. No other mother ever was so good as you have been. I have known it all and thought of it every day of my life, and thanked you in my heart for your trusting silence. Of course, I understand your feelings. You think him bad and you hate him for what he has done."

"I would not willingly hate any one, Lily."

"Ah but you do hate him. If I were you, I should hate him; but I am not you, and I love him. I pray for his happiness every night and morning, and for hers. I have forgiven him altogether, and I think that he was right. When I am old enough to do so without being wrong, I will go to him and tell him so. I should like to hear of all his doings and all his success, if it were only possible. How, then, can you and I talk about him? It is impossible. You have been silent and I have been silent;—let us remain silent."

"It is not about Mr. Crosbie that I wish to speak. But I think you

ought to understand that conduct such as his will be rebuked by all the world. You may forgive him, but you should acknowledge ——”

“ Mamma, I don’t want to acknowledge anything ;—not about him. There are things as to which a person cannot argue.” Mrs. Dale felt that this present matter was one as to which she could not argue. “ Of course, mamma,” continued Lily, “ I don’t want to oppose you in anything, but I think we had better be silent about this.”

“ Of course I am thinking only of your future happiness.”

“ I know you are; but pray believe me that you need not be alarmed. I do not mean to be unhappy. Indeed, I think I may say I am not unhappy; of course I have been unhappy,—very unhappy. I did think that my heart would break. But that has passed away, and I believe I can be as happy as my neighbours. We’re all of us sure to have some troubles, as you used to tell us when we were children.”

Mrs. Dale felt that she had begun wrong, and that she would have been able to make better progress had she omitted all mention of Crosbie’s name. She knew exactly what it was that she wished to say,—what were the arguments which she desired to expound before her daughter; but she did not know what language to use, or how she might best put her thoughts into words. She paused for a while, and Lily went on with her work as though the conversation was over. But the conversation was not over.

“ It was about John Eames, and not about Mr. Crosbie, that I wished to speak to you.”

“ Oh, mamma ! ”

“ My dear, you must not hinder me in doing what I think to be a duty. I heard what he said to you and what you replied, and of course I cannot but have my mind full of the subject. Why should you set yourself against him in so fixed a manner ? ”

“ Because I love another man.” These words she spoke out loud, in a steady, almost dogged tone, with a certain show of audacity,—as though aware that the declaration was unseemly, but resolved that, though unseemly, it must be made.

“ But, Lily, that love, from its very nature, must cease; or, rather, such love is not the same as that you felt when you thought that you were to be his wife.”

“ Yes, it is. If she died, and he came to me in five years’ time, I would still take him. I should think myself constrained to take him.”

“ But she is not dead, nor likely to die.”

“ That makes no difference. You don’t understand me, mamma.”

“ I think I do, and I want you to understand me also. I know how difficult is your position; I know what your feelings are; but I know this also, that if you could reason with yourself and bring yourself in time to receive John Eames as a dear friend ——”

“ I did receive him as a dear friend. Why not? He is a dear friend. I love him heartily,—as you do.”

“ You know what I mean? ”

"Yes, I do; and I tell you it is impossible."

"If you would make the attempt, all this misery would soon be forgotten. If once you could bring yourself to regard him as a friend who might become your husband, all this would be changed,—and I should see you happy!"

"You are strangely anxious to be rid of me, mamma!"

"Yes, Lily;—to be rid of you in that way. If I could see you put your hand in his as his promised wife, I think that I should be the happiest woman in the world."

"Mamma, I cannot make you happy in that way. If you really understood my feelings, my doing as you propose would make you very unhappy. I should commit a great sin,—the sin against which women should be more guarded than against any other. In my heart I am married to that other man. I gave myself to him, and loved him, and rejoiced in his love. When he kissed me I kissed him again, and I longed for his kisses. I seemed to live only that he might caress me. All that time I never felt myself to be wrong,—because he was all in all to me. I was his own. That has been changed,—to my great misfortune; but it cannot be undone or forgotten. I cannot be the girl I was before he came here. There are things that will not have themselves buried and put out of sight, as though they had never been. I am as you are, mamma,—widowed. But you have your daughter, and I have my mother. If you will be contented, so will I." Then she got up and threw herself on her mother's neck.

Mrs. Dale's argument was over now. To such an appeal as that last made by Lily no rejoinder on her part was possible. After that she was driven to acknowledge to herself that she must be silent. Years as they rolled on might make a change, but no reasoning could be of avail. She embraced her daughter, weeping over her,—whereas Lily's eyes were dry. "It shall be as you will," Mrs. Dale murmured.

"Yes, as I will. I shall have my own way; shall I not? That is all I want; to be a tyrant over you, and make you do my bidding in everything, as a well-behaved mother should do. But I won't be stern in my orderings. If you will only be obedient, I will be so gracious to you! There's Hopkins again. I wonder whether he has come to knock us down and trample upon us with another speech."

Hopkins knew very well to which window he must come, as only one of the rooms was at the present time habitable. He came up to the dining-room, and almost flattened his nose against the glass.

"Well, Hopkins," said Lily, "here we are." Mrs. Dale had turned her face away, for she knew that the tears were still on her cheek.

"Yes, miss, I see you. I want to speak to your mamma, miss."

"Come round," said Lily, anxious to spare her mother the necessity of showing herself at once. "It's too cold to open the window; come round, and I'll open the door."

"Too cold!" muttered Hopkins, as he went. "They'll find it a deal

colder in lodgings at Guestwick." However, he went round through the kitchen, and Lily met him in the hall.

"Well, Hopkins, what is it? Mamma has got a headache."

"Got a headache, has she? I won't make her headache no worse. It's my opinion that there's nothing for a headache so good as fresh air. Only some people can't bear to be blowed upon, not for a minute. If you don't let down the lights in a greenhouse more or less every day, you'll never get any plants,—never; and it's just the same with the grapes. Is I to go back and say as how I couldn't see her?"

"You can come in if you like; only be quiet, you know."

"Ain't I allays quiet, miss? Did anybody ever hear me rampage? If you please, ma'am, the squire's come home."

"What, home from Guestwick? Has he brought Miss Bell?"

"He ain't brought none but hisself, 'cause he come on horseback; and it's my belief he's going back almost immediate. But he wants you to come to him, Mrs. Dale."

"Oh, yes, I'll come at once."

"He bade me say with his kind love. I don't know whether that makes any difference."

"At any rate I'll come, Hopkins."

"And I ain't to say nothing about the headache?"

"About what?" said Mrs. Dale.

"No, no, no," said Lily. "Mamma will be there at once. Go and tell my uncle, there's a good man," and she put up her hand and backed him out of the room.

"I don't believe she's got no headache at all," said Hopkins, grumbling, as he returned through the back premises. "What lies gentlefolks do tell! If I said I'd a headache when I ought to be out among the things, what would they say to me? But a poor man mustn't never lie, nor yet drink, nor yet do nothing." And so he went back with his message.

"What can have brought your uncle home?" said Mrs. Dale.

"Just to look after the cattle, and to see that the pigs are not all dead. My wonder is that he should ever have gone away."

"I must go up to him at once."

"Oh, yes, of course."

"And what shall I say about the house?"

"It's not about that,—at least I think not. I don't think he'll speak about that again till you speak to him."

"But if he does?"

"You must put your trust in Providence. Declare you've got a bad headache, as I told Hopkins just now; only you would throw me over by not understanding. I'll walk with you down to the bridge." So they went off together across the lawn.

But Lily was soon left alone, and continued her walk, waiting for her mother's return. As she went round and round the gravel paths,

she thought of the words that she had said to her mother. She had declared that she also was widowed. "And so it should be," she said, debating the matter with herself. "What can a heart be worth if it can be transferred hither and thither as circumstances and convenience and comfort may require? When he held me here in his arms"—and, as the thoughts ran through her brain, she remembered the very spot on which they had stood—"oh, my love!" she had said to him then as she returned his kisses—"oh, my love, my love, my love!" "When he held me here in his arms, I told myself that it was right, because he was my husband. He has changed, but I have not. It might be that I should have ceased to love him, and then I should have told him so. I should have done as he did." But, as she came to this, she shuddered, thinking of the Lady Alexandrina. "It was very quick," she said, still speaking to herself; "very, very. But then men are not the same as women." And she walked on eagerly, hardly remembering where she was, thinking over it all, as she did daily; remembering every little thought and word of those few eventful months in which she had learned to regard Crosbie as her husband and master. She had declared that she had conquered her unhappiness; but there were moments in which she was almost wild with misery. "Tell me to forget him!" she said. "It is the one thing which will never be forgotten."

At last she heard her mother's step coming down across the squire's garden, and she took up her post at the bridge.

"Stand and deliver," she said, as her mother put her foot upon the plank. "That is, if you've got anything worth delivering. Is anything settled?"

"Come up to the house," said Mrs. Dale, "and I'll tell you all."

Phosphorus and Civilization.

PHILOSOPHY enables us to bear with great equanimity the misfortunes of others. Science, on the other hand, has the bad character of being an alarmist; it is constantly prophesying terrible consequences, or consequences that would be terrible did not Philosophy step in to reassure us by pointing out that our alarm is needless, since the predictions concern our descendants rather than ourselves. For example, Science has calculated the period at which all our coal, now so prodigally burned, will have dwindled to its last seam; but this destruction of our greatest source of wealth is contemplated with much calmness, because Philosophy not only points out that the period is still distant, but serenely relies on Science finding a substitute for coal when the coal is exhausted. *What* substitute? It is not the business of Philosophy to discover one; she merely says that Heat having been declared to be merely a mode of Motion,* some other means of getting the requisite motion will surely be found—and leaves you to find it.

This is very consoling. Can we not get a similar relief from a wide-sweeping view of another alarming state of things? I allude to the gradual degeneration of the race consequent upon a gradual exhaustion of our stock of phosphorus. Like coal, the quantity of phosphorus on the crust of this agreeable planet is limited; and, unlike coal, its place cannot be supplied. Nations have done without coal, and may again do without it; but without phosphorus men and animals cannot exist; and without abundance of phosphorus they will be stunted and rickety. Nor will any other element play its part.

Consider for a moment: every adult human being requires at least four pounds of phosphates to build up his bony framework, quite apart from the quantities used up in his softer parts. This amount is sequestered from the earth, and never returns to it. Yet the earth without phosphates refuses to grow plants. Think of the millions upon millions of pounds which are drawn away from the primitive stock, and you will understand why vast stretches of Asia Minor are barren, why parts of Sicily, Palestine, Arabia Felix (once so fertile), and the plains of Babylon, are deserts. These lands have been robbed of their phosphates. If Egypt

* "Heat only a mode of Motion!" Such may be the dictum of Science; but Philosophy, jealous of accuracy in language, may not improperly ask, And pray, what is Motion a mode of? Surely it is the manifestation of Force, and Heat likewise is a manifestation of Force, most probably of the same Force, but assuredly not of Motion, otherwise it would be the manifestation of a manifestation.

still preserves her ancient fertility it is because the annual inundation of the Nile renews the precious phosphates.

Philosophy considers this, as requested, and straightway begins to theorize upon it. She bids us remark the law of History (she is fond of such "laws"), that nations after emerging from barbarism into civilization, after growing in wealth, skill, luxury, and populousness, are always submerged by some fresh wave of barbarism. The puny citizen, enervated by luxury, cannot withstand the stalwart barbarian. So it has been; so it will ever be. All the skill, and all the appliances which make men formidable to beasts, fail to make men formidable to barbarians. With knowledge and wealth has come the corruption of Luxury. It is that which has destroyed the rude and manly *virtus* of an elder time; it is that which makes men dissolute, selfish, timid, without fervour, without patriotism.

Are you quite sure of this, O philosopher? Is Luxury so universal in civilized communities that nations no less than individuals are enfeebled by it? Have the millions been accustomed to Capuan indulgences? Let us abandon rhetoric for a moment, and see whether the enfeeblement of nations may not be traced less to the excess of civilization than to the deficiency of phosphorus. It is a paradox I set before you, no doubt; but it is not less likely to be a truth because it contradicts your opinions—which is the meaning of a paradox.

Did the barbarians always conquer because they were ignorant? No; because they were strong. They were truly the "sons of the soil," and of a soil not robbed of its phosphates, like the soil of old and crowded nations. The civilized Roman trembled at the presence of the gigantic Gaul; but the descendant of that Gaul is so little of a giant that he now boasts of his stature when he is four feet six!* It was remarked by Pliny that the Romans were rapidly degenerating in stature, and that sons were rarely so tall as their fathers; but he attributed this degeneration to the exhaustion of the vital sap, not knowing that a Liebig would come to proclaim the exhaustion of precious phosphorus.† What a prospect for man! His stature dwindles as phosphorus disappears. His race has been constantly robbing the soil of precious material which has not been returned to it, as nature requires, and the effect of this at last will be national bankruptcy.

Plants impoverish the soil; but all they snatch from it to build up their existences may be returned to it, and often is returned, though civilized ignorance often wastes it. The animals eat the plants, and take up the phosphates into their own bodies. A judicious system of

* A conscript once objected that he was below the standard height; the recruiting officer eyed him kindly, and exclaimed, "Four feet four—without your shirt—*c'est magnifique!*"

† "In plenum autem cancto mortalium generi minorem in dies fieri, propemodum observatur: raroque patribus proceriores, consumente ubertatem seminum exustione." —*Hist. Nat.*, vii. 16.

agriculture would restore all this to the soil, by careful distribution of the sewage, and by using the bones as manure. Even the quantities used up by man might also be restored, if the sewage were skilfully distributed, and if our practice of burial did not annually hide away the enormous quantities stored up in man's bony structure. The bones of men are buried, and thus, in a loose, unscientific sense, may be said to return to earth the phosphates originally derived from earth. But this is loose talk. The bones keep all their phosphates. It is only the organic matters which are decomposed in the grave; the phosphates remain and are not redistributed through the soil.

"The only real loss of elements," says Liebig, "which we are unable to prevent, is of the phosphates, in so far as these, in accordance with the customs of modern nations, are deposited in the grave. For the rest, every part of that enormous quantity of food which a man consumes during his lifetime, which was derived from the fields, can be returned to them. We know with absolute certainty that we receive back in sewage all the salts and alkaline bases, all the phosphates of lime and magnesia, which the animal consumed in its food."

It is not probable that men will give up the practice of burial, so that all the phosphates stored up in their skeletons must needs be withheld from the soil; but it is probable that the growing necessities of men will force them into something like a rational use of sewage. We shall learn not to waste the tons of precious material which is hourly poured into rivers and seas; we shall have our guano in abundance and near at hand. Unless we learn this, our case is desperate. If men persist in consuming phosphorus, and in wasting it as they do now, Science foresees the end.

Yet Philosophy is calm, because the end is distant. Were it not so, the alarm would embitter our pleasant lives. We should be eternally fidgeting about phosphorus. Some dreadful statist would oppress us with his calculations, showing the effect of lucifer-matches upon Europe. He would exclaim: "Sir, lucifer-matches have wasted an amount of phosphorus which might have equipped a mighty nation with its necessary bones." And our only reply would be, "Then let the mighty nation do with cartilage." We could not patiently listen to such croakings. Every time we lighted a cigar we should think we were hastening the irruption of the Barbarians. Intolerable!

The Fashion of Furniture.

THERE is an idle expression in vogue among certain honest folks who, while modestly disclaiming connoisseurship in matters of taste, desire to remind you that they have not, nevertheless, abandoned all opinion on the subject. "I know what I like," is the not over sapient remark made on such occasions by those who affect, and frequently feel, an interest in some particular class of art which they are neither prepared to justify nor to transfer in any other direction. They assign no better reason for their choice than the gentleman to whom the unoffending Dr. Fell became an object of such inexplicable antipathy. To know what one likes, and what one dislikes, seems the simplest thing in the world, and yet there are matters of every-day life in which even this faculty seems doubtfully exercised by the million.

Let us take a familiar instance by way of illustration:—A newly-married couple, of average means, intelligence, and education, desire to furnish their house. The house itself, especially if it be in London, will have no pretensions to beauty. Indeed, it has come by degrees to be admitted that the plainer a town dwelling is on the outside, the more respectable is its appearance. All that is demanded, therefore, is that the stucco shall be fresh and clean, the window-frames recently painted, and the bricks neatly picked out with cement. The future tenant cannot alter his street front if he would. That is past praying for. In this respect he must be content with what his next-door neighbour has—with what all his neighbours, up and down the whole street, have. But the interior of the house is a field in which his taste, or his wife's taste, may find full scope. That they have a taste probably neither of them doubts for an instant. Let us grant the fact, for argument's sake, and then watch how they exercise it. At the furniture warehouse, they are in the upholsterer's hands ; at the china-shop, they are as easily talked over by the obsequious vendor of wine-glasses and dinner-plates. The carpet merchant leads them by the nose. They fancy they are choosing chairs, and rugs, and crockery ;—in reality, they only look on while their tradesmen select for them. The young couple will probably be told that a Turkey carpet and a dark paper are proper for a dining-room, while a light paper and a Brussels carpet must adorn the drawing-room. There must be a straight fender in the library, and a curvilinear fender upstairs. The chairs on which they sit to eat may be of oak or mahogany ; the chairs on which they sit to talk must be of walnut or rosewood. A square table must be in such a room ; a round one somewhere else. In the matter of paper-hangings, they would be literally at sea, but for

the suggestions of the ingenious gentleman on the other side of the counter, who kindly informs them which patterns are "elegant," which are "genteel," "neat," or "much in request," and it is remarkable that he applies one or another of these epithets to every fresh piece which engages their attention. They may have rose-sprigs interlaced with satin ribbon, or crimson "flock" designs set in panels of sham perspective, or Moressesque intricacies surrounded by a border of wild-flowers. "We sell a great deal of this," says the indefatigable shopman, after turning over some hundred pages of his sample-book; and probably "this" is selected for no better reason.

The same farce is played over at the draper's, where the window-curtains and tablecloths are chosen. It is of course *de rigueur* that the former must be either suspended on a huge brass pole, which blossoms out into a gigantic fuchsia at each end, with rings as large as a man's arm, or hang from a weakly iron rod which is concealed by what is called a gilt cornice, and of which no mortal man has ever been able to divine the object, except that, as the upholsterer would say, it "gives a *finish* to the room." It is absolutely necessary, moreover, to meet the requirements of modern fashion, that the curtains should be about a yard too long, in order that they may be looped up on either side, and thus afford receptacles for dust, besides being cut to pieces by the awkward, ugly-looking brass hook which is to keep them in their place. The idea of hanging curtains of only the *requisite* length straight down from a small, strong brass rod, over which stout little rings would easily slip, and omitting the "finish" above, is of course too obvious and heterodox a notion to be entertained. With regard to the nature of the materials of which these articles are composed, I have observed that the all-important point in the upholstering mind is that they shall match the rest of the furniture in colour. What is the prevailing tint on your carpet?—Crimson? Then you must have crimson curtains, crimson sofa, crimson everything. It would not be good taste to have a contrast. Of course not—there is no such thing in nature.

When the young couple come to buy their chairs and tables, a new difficulty presents itself. What is the proper shape for a chair? Accepting the venerable tradition that a dining-room chair must be of oak and covered with leather (excellent conditions in themselves, by the way), they generally choose something with a broad back that looks as if it could not easily be kicked over. And here I must admit that there has been a slight improvement lately in the way of dining-room chairs. You may buy some of a really fair design even in Tottenham-court Road—that Vanity Fair of cheap and flimsy uglinesses.

But the design of drawing-room furniture remains in *statu quo*. Unstable, rickety sticks of walnut or rosewood, inlaid, perhaps, with mother-of-pearl which no one sees, or twisted into "fancy" backs which torture the sitter or break beneath his weight, constitute the "occasional" chairs which are so much in request by the British public. Sofas, having

no more shape than a feather-bed thrown into a corner would assume, without being nearly so comfortable, are called "elegant" and "luxurious." Luxurious they are, no doubt, for those who wish to sleep all night on them without taking off their clothes. But under such circumstances people generally prefer to go to bed. It is difficult to conceive anything in the whole range of upholstery uglier than the modern settee or couch. The foolish twisting and curving of its sides and seat, the careful concealment of its structure (a fatal mistake in the design of all useful objects), and its general puffy and blown-out appearance, combine to make it a thoroughly unartistic object. The old quasi-Greek sofa used in the early part of this century was a much better form, and quite as comfortable as any but sluggards need desire.

It is not too much to say that there is hardly an article to be found for sale in a modern upholsterer's shop which will bear evidence of even the commonest principles of good design. The individual merits of Gothic or classic art are not here questioned. Our furniture has *no style at all*. The wonder is, who supplies the patterns for this endless variety of absurdities; who is responsible for the "shaped" backs of sideboards and washing-tables, and the bandy-legged seats which we occupy. No doubt there are many "leading firms" who flatter themselves that the contents of their warehouses are exceptions to the general rule; and, indeed, if high prices and sound workmanship ensured good taste, there would be no lack of the latter. But, unfortunately, of furniture which is—to use a trade expression—kept on stock, the more expensive it is, the uglier it is sure to be.

I do not propose to allude here to the present condition of what are generally known as the fine arts in England, except in so far as it influences the design of modern manufacture. Of painting and sculpture (in the ordinary sense of the word) we cannot be said ever to have had national schools. But we had a national architecture, and there is this difference between its history and that of other countries. They possess theirs, for the most part, in a degraded form. We have lost our own altogether, and with it that capability of distinguishing right from wrong form in objects of every-day use, which may be said to constitute a national taste.

However strange it may seem, we are more likely, in our present state of civilization, to rightly appreciate the grace and loveliness of nature than to form (untaught) a just estimate of the artistic value of human handiwork. And, to complete the paradox, men, in a rude and unsophisticated state of life, though they may express little admiration at what is no more than the ordinary fulfilment of nature's laws, are often on a better road to a certain order of art than if their judgment had been trammelled by the conventionalities of an art education.

The eye requires less elementary education, at least in uncivilized life, than the ear, and its earliest instinct declares more for decorative art than for natural beauties. The New Zealander, who may be equally unmoved by pastoral symphonies and pastoral landscape, can often carve a

canoe-head, or whittle a battle-club, in a better style of ornament than any pupil in our schools of design. No one who examined the specimens of bead-embroidery and needlework by the North-American Indians in the Great Exhibition of 1862 can fail to have been struck by the exquisite feeling for colour, and judicious arrangement of material, displayed in the dresses and accoutrements of the Melicet and other tribes. Again, the commonest articles of hardware—wooden bowls, boxes, and cottage furniture—produced by the Norwegian peasantry, although of the rudest description, bear evidence of a judicious taste, which all the Kensington lectures could not improve.

This faculty of decorating articles of common use—especially those of textile fabric—fitly, by keeping the nature of their material in view, and putting the right sort of ornament in the right place, is one which seems the natural inheritance of most nations in their early and primitive state, and even long afterwards, where the progress of modern manufacture has not interfered with it. No doubt it is, to some extent, influenced by tradition; but, in the main, it is an instinctive ability, and, in its exercise, is the more valuable *because* it is instinctive; just as every movement of a child is sure to be graceful until the dancing-master comes, with his toes turned outwards, and teaches it deportment.

It may indeed be argued, in answer to this parallel, that a well-bred and comely woman will have, by-and-by, a grace of her own, independent of drill and backboards, but on which those exercises may have had a beneficial influence; and so I do not mean to pretend that the moccasins of an Indian squaw, and the notchings on a Feejee spear-handle, represent the highest aim of decorative art. But it is certain that the best designs in that art have resulted either from education of the most refined order, or from no education at all. "A little knowledge," says the poet-philosopher, "is a dangerous thing." The aphorism is nowhere more applicable than in the field of art. A Marquesas Islander may produce good ornament without rule or method, just as English shepherds, who never saw a coin of Antiochus, have idly cut the pentalpha out on turf. Venetian workmen of the 13th century produced designs which were the result of the highest order of art education. Bating the difference which must of course ensue from the use of rich material and good tools, on the one hand, and the rude appliances of uncivilized life on the other, these remotely separated classes of decorative art will be found identical in motive. But we Englishmen of the 19th century, having lost for centuries our own indigenous spirit of design, perplexed by the doctrines of widely-opposed schools, and sophisticated by, rather than learned in, their various principles, borrow now from the ancient art of Greece, now from Italian Renaissance; sometimes seek our inspiration from the mercetricious prettiness of French Rococo, sometimes launch into vagaries which represent a silly jumble of all three, but oftener sink into a hopeless vulgarity of style which cannot be said to have relation to either.

All artists know that, in every country, the articles of common use,

which are of too humble a description to be subject to the vitiating influence of cheap and tawdry manufacture, will always be found in better taste than a great deal which is contained in drawing-rooms. The design of Flemish beer-cups and of Roman peasants' scarfs, for instance, is good, because it is traditional and has been handed down from an age of good art. One of the few specimens of honest English manufacture which remain in this country is the ordinary Windsor chair, some very pretty types of which may be sometimes seen in our cottages or round a kitchen fire. Its price is about three or four shillings. A modern upholsterer in Oxford Street would probably be surprised to hear it compared with the elegancies in his shop which cost nearly as many guineas. Yet, in point of taste, this common Windsor chair, the design of which has probably varied little for the last two centuries, is infinitely superior to them. It is exceedingly comfortable, well made, and picturesque. The first two qualities will recommend it to utilitarians. In the latter is afforded the simplest test by which all true lovers of art can distinguish good work from bad. Will it look well in a painting? If so, we may be sure it has some artistic merit.

There is no greater fallacy than to suppose that the interest of picturesqueness in architecture and still life is wholly derived from age and dilapidation. Young ladies may like to believe that the ruins of Netley Abbey and Carisbrooke Castle afford good subjects for their albums, simply because they are *ruins*. But what future Roberts would care to paint a scene in Pimlico, although its walls were roofless, and streets choked up with briar? A fine old sturdy chair of the "Cromwell" type may become old and worm-eaten. The embossments of its leather may be obliterated, the velvet cushion worn and threadbare, but it is dignified in its old age. Our modern furniture grows shabby with a few years' wear. Within a man's lifetime it becomes a mean and dishonourable wreck.

When, therefore, we hear of a house being *tastefully* fitted up from an upholsterer's shop, we may be sure that it means nothing but *expensively* fitted up. There is a slight improvement, it is true, noticeable here and there in the way of carpets and paper-hangings; but the mass of buyers are unable to avail themselves even of these exceptions. Should a stray connoisseur now and then attempt to furnish designs, even of the simplest description, for his furniture, he will find himself involved in at least double the expense which he would incur if he bought his sofas and tables ready made; and this not owing to any extra cost of material or elaboration, but because the cabinet-maker would be called on to make what he had not made in precisely the same form before. Our joiners, as a rule, work in this manner, like machines. One man devotes himself to legs, another to backs, another to seats of chairs—hundreds at a time, and each precisely like the last. This is division of labour; no doubt a useful thing in its way, but utterly opposed to any chance of originality or departure from those designs which are thus confirmed in their ugliness by a species of tradition.

It is true that furniture once produced in a good style might be as easily multiplied, and, in course of time, be offered for sale at the same price as that in a bad style; but the question is, how this reformation is to be effected? An upholsterer's idea of artistic furniture is very much the same as a milliner's idea of taste in dress. Both are regulated by fashion. Neither will produce at an outlay of capital what is supposed there will be no demand for. But while the upholsterer is waiting for demand, the public is waiting for supply. It cannot be expected that people of ordinary means, who are capable of appreciating the merits of a good design, will be at the trouble and expense of having furniture made expressly for them. They can only select from what is offered for sale. The growing taste for mediæval art in England has induced a feeling for what Pugin called the "true principles" of design. There is no reason why those principles should not be applied to the simplest article of domestic use. But this idea has never been carried out by any tradesman. The so-called Gothic furniture, which is occasionally exposed for sale, is at once needlessly elaborate, cumbrous, and expensive. What is wanted is a class of goods which shall be designed by those who have really made a study of decorative art, and which, while it meets the requirements of the present age in point of convenience, will also bear competition with ordinary furniture in regard to price.

There are, of course, among our educated architects, men who could easily prepare designs which should fulfil these conditions; but upholsterers do not avail themselves of their assistance. The artistic spirit must be met by commercial interest before any improvement can be effected.

The truth is, that there are few questions on which the general public are so ignorant and so jealous as in matters of taste, in the commonest acceptation of the word. It seems to be looked on as an intuitive quality by some people. It is confessed that a man must have a musical education before he enjoys good music. He must have read or studied long, before he can appreciate the highest qualities of the painter's art. But we think ourselves competent to judge of the pattern of a carpet or the shape of a water-bottle, without any teaching at all. The familiar tone adopted by the general press in deciding the style of a public monument is not more amusing than the easy confidence which every one has in his own taste. A man will yield to another in any sort of controversy—religious, social or political—sooner than abandon his beau-ideal of art work, if he cares for art at all. Even those who are really indifferent on the subject are prone to affect a decided opinion. "Tastes, madam!" cries poor Sir Peter Teazle, to his vain and headstrong wife, who has been recounting her extravagances. "Zounds, madam, when you married me, you'd *no taste*." It is, indeed, not impossible that an affected preference of style may in due time assume a more genuine shape. "A learned critic," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, in one of his lectures, "recommends us to feign a relish till we find a relish come, and feel that what began in fiction terminates in reality."

One thing is certain, that good taste for art in our present state of

civilization must in some way be an acquired taste. All so-called natural taste in this country, while we are surrounded by vulgarities of design from our youth up, must be bad. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it would lead men, left to themselves, to prefer elaboration to simplicity, direct imitation of nature to the chaste and sober conventionalities of ornament, crude and violent contrasts of primary colour to the refined association of delicate tints. The natural taste of our day would soon, without teaching, weave the likeness of Bengal tigers on our hearth-rugs, commit young ladies to the copying of popular paintings in Berlin wool, turn the carpet under our feet into the likeness of an unweeded garden. Its tendency is to twist everything that should be straight, to cut and carve, and fritter with worthless finery, all that depends for its very dignity on plain and solid workmanship.

The worth of all true and good ornament will be in proportion to the enduring pleasure which it gives the eye. Who looks at a photograph on a coal-box, when the latter has been a week in the house? Who cares for the foolish complexity of gilt flourishes about a drawing-room mirror after the first day of its possession, or the machine-made mouldings which adorn our woodwork? These are instances of ornament which is uninteresting either in itself, or because it is misplaced. We feel instinctively that a delicate portrait or landscape is degraded by its association with dirty fuel. A bargeman in white kid-gloves would not be a more ridiculous object. We know that those rococo scrolls and tortuous nonentities at the foot of yon gilded frame, which pretend to be the result of so much labour, are chopped out by the dozen out of the meanest material and in the meanest manner, before they are glued into their places. We know that our doors could be framed as well (and often better) without the silly lines and stripes of wood which run round their panels. Such "ornament" as this adds to our expense, without adding to our pleasure. It might all be absent, and we should not miss it. Not so with good and judicious decoration. The eye returns again and again with satisfaction to a well-designed wall-paper or to a window-curtain in which the tints are harmonious. Good drawing and good colour, in their proper place, never become uninteresting; but how seldom are they seen in modern work!

One of the most remarkable facts in connection with art manufacture is the unequal progress of its various branches. Textile, fictile, and metallic designs have made rapid strides within the last ten years. Minton's plates and Hardman's locks and gas-fittings are not, indeed, yet within the reach of the million; still, those who can afford to pay for such ware may have it. But upholstery seems in a state of stagnation. Its design appears to have deteriorated rather than advanced. There is not a single establishment in London which produces what any competent judge would describe as artistic furniture for ordinary sale.

It is to be feared that the tendency of art-impulse in England has up to this time been too neglectful of common things. We have learned how to paint fine costumes within a gilded frame, but not how to stencil a

plastered wall. We have fashioned out the deities of Olympus in white marble, but cannot vie with the old English sculptors who carved their freestone into mirthful satire. We have tried to build monuments, without first trying our hand at cottages, and, lost in the study of palaces, have forgotten to look about us for a chair. Yet in all good ages of art we find it expressed among the necessities, as well as the poetry of life, not more earnestly in the artist's studio, than in the carpenter's shop. A great authority has shown us that the only true historical painting of all nations has been that which illustrated its own time. Can we hope for such an art, while we are surrounded by objects which it would be impossible for the painter to invest with interest? The modern school of pre-Raphaelites set out with the idea of portraying the heroic incidents of every-day life. The notion was an excellent one, and promised a healthy and honest phase of art in this country. But among the early promoters of the movement, few have adhered to their original intention, and the reason, though, perhaps, unacknowledged, is evident enough.

It is impossible to associate with a poetical conception the crude and vulgar shapes which become the accessories of a modern background. The ordeal was too severe even for the brush of Hunt or Millais. Those who have seen and have admired such works as the *Awakening Conscience*, will remember how impossible it was to look for an instant on the mean adjuncts of even a noble picture, without feeling that they deprived the composition of half its poetry. The eye was shocked by the intrusion of modern upholstery in a scene which demanded from the spectator the highest order of sympathy and emotion. That such pictures became attractive at all, was owing to the master hands which had worked upon them. The subjects themselves, considered with reference to costume and still life, were as ugly as could be imagined. And what master hands did with difficulty, inferior artists failed to do altogether. It is not too much to say that of those exhibited paintings in which year by year it is endeavoured to derive sentiment from episodes of drawing-room and boudoir life, nine-tenths are passed over by people of sound taste with indifference or contempt. The very presence of our ugly chairs and tables in a picture makes one regret that time should have been wasted in perpetuating the likeness of such uninteresting work. Far different was it in the best ages of art. Then the painter was not ashamed of his backgrounds, but lavished as much care on the shape of a settle, or the diapered pattern of a curtain, as on the features of his hero. There is a picture by Van Eyck (once known as "the Betrothal") in the National Gallery. The accessories of this picture are as interesting as the figures themselves.* A brazen lamp hanging from the ceiling, and a convex mirror attached to the wall, are painted with such consummate care that their design might be reproduced by any intelligent artificer. And the labour has not been mis-spent, for they are works of art in themselves,

* Now ascertained to be portraits of Jean Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenany, his wife.

and worthy of the age in which the picture was painted. Would that we could say as much for the Brummagem goods displayed in the windows of Oxford Street!

One obstacle which impedes the progress of art-manufacture in common things, is the fatal mistake which people make in supposing that extravagance of form and excessive ornamentation are necessary conditions of good design. There is a ridiculous word in use among upholsterers to indicate the unnecessarily twisted outline which is characteristic of modern furniture. When the back of a side-board, or marble washing-stand is cut about into ogival or parabolic curves, it is called "shaped" in shopman's slang. This *shaping* materially increases the expense of the article, without adding any real pleasure to the eye. Yet so long have the public been accustomed to this silly style of ornamentation, that it has come to be considered "elegant" by those whose only idea of beauty is regulated by the fashion of the day. Much money is wasted in this direction, and in loading with mouldings and machine-made carving, objects of common use; and the result is that we either have to pay dearly for bad art, or sustain an equivalent loss in inferior workmanship. The best made furniture of the present day is needlessly dear, but the bargains in cheap-furniture "marts" are infinitely dearer in the end. We often congratulate ourselves on the comparatively low price of certain articles for which our forefathers paid so much. But we forget that furniture in their days often lasted a life-time, much of ours becomes rickety within a short time after purchase, and before many years has to be replaced altogether. There is a want of solidity about it, and a want of purpose about it which tends to this result.

It is an advantage that a drawing-room chair, for instance, should be light and capable of being handed about easily, but it is absurd that to attain this object the chair should be made of such flimsy materials that the mistress of a house is afraid to ask her stoutest friends to sit upon it. There is an unreasonableness, too, in its shape. One of the earliest types of chair (often represented in old Italian pictures), had a broad band of stout leather which stretched between the back-rails, just beneath the shoulder-blades of the sitter, accommodated itself easily to the form, and was about the best and most comfortable support that could be devised. In later days this strap was replaced by the padded back of our "Cromwell" chair, and in the early part of this century by the flat cross-rail, which, though not so luxurious, answered the same purpose. But now, for the sake of lightness and so-called "elegance," we have to endure the galling of a cruel wooden *rod*, which, twisted into an indescribable curve behind us, denies all rest to weary shoulders. One of the great arguments brought by the ignorant against the re-introduction of mediæval furniture is the alleged discomfort which its use involves. This arises from a thoroughly false notion of the appliances of mediæval design. We may be sure of one thing, that the furniture of that period was quite as comfortable as people wished. If not, the ingenuity of ancient handicraft

would soon have met the difficulty. The invention of the "miserere" seat—a compromise between the exigencies of ritual and a due sense of canonical comfort—is an instance among many which might be brought forward of such ingenuity. It is often simply because the *proportions* of old furniture are so much at variance with that which we are accustomed to see about us, that we ignorantly associate the former with inconvenience. The high-backed chair, with the *low seat*, which was its invariable accompaniment, will really be found, on a fair trial, far more fitted for a posture of rest, than many which modern notions of luxury have devised.

If upholsterers could only lay aside the conventionalities of fashion, and work in a more independent and less sophisticated manner, keeping the object and ultimate use of their work more in view than (what they consider) the elegance of its appearance, it would soon have a genuine interest of its own, and much foolish expense would be saved; while the addition of judicious ornament, designed by really able hands, would present no difficulty, if demand were made by those who could afford it. As it is, cheap furniture, like cheap jewelry, aims in a tawdry manner at the elaboration which can only honestly be produced at a price infinitely beyond its marketable value.

There is a direct analogy between the spirit which induces a vulgar woman to dress beyond her station in life at a sacrifice of more necessary requirements, and the silly demand of small householders that the fittings of their dwellings should ape those of a much higher rent. If stone dressings to the external face of doors and windows are costly luxuries, there must be gimcrack imitations of them in plaster. If oak and mahogany cannot be afforded, veneer and paint are employed to supply the deficiency. The chimney-piece may be the insecurest sham; thin strips of material barely cemented together—but it must be a *white marble* chimney-piece, or what tenant would take the house? The same desire for elegance and modernism involves the use of door-handles and locks, in which soundness of construction is sacrificed to a showy appearance, and the consequence is, that in small tenements they are continually out of order. The humbler but more honestly-made appliances, which satisfied our forefathers in this and many other respects, would be discarded by the gentility of suburban villas.

It is well known by those who are familiar with the mysteries of the trade," that a large majority of the bargains picked up at mock auctions and (so-called) second-hand furniture shops, consist of worthless articles, never really used before, but hastily knocked up by inferior ill-paid hands, to be foisted on the public as genuine and useful goods. A little paint and varnish go far towards deceiving the unwary, and it is only some weeks after purchase that the possessor begins to find out the real nature of his investment. The green unseasoned wood, of which his hanging-press is made, splits right across a panel. Trumpery castors (perhaps attached by *one* screw) recede from the legs of his couch, while buttons disappear one by one from its cushion. Arm-chairs are found

to be weak in the spine, and sofas frequently suffer from some internal complaint, which precludes the possibility of lying on them with comfort. The carved "enrichment," on the beauties of which Mr. Shadrach's young man so warmly expatiated, proves to be nothing but a conglomeration of little lumps of wood and glue. Even the dining-room table (lately the property of a distinguished gentleman) slides out with difficulty, and, once extended, declines to slide in at all.

These are misfortunes besetting that section of the British public which insists upon the "elegance" of furniture at any price. Strong, useful, homely articles might be made, in better taste, for less money, but the exigencies of fashion forbid their use, and thus indirectly prevent their manufacture.

Much expense might be saved in the way of material. Of all woods used in joinery there is no doubt that oak is by far the most durable, and, for general purposes, the most pleasing in appearance. But it is dear and too heavy for the construction of furniture which we require to move readily. Beech, on the contrary, is a much lighter and far cheaper material than oak or mahogany. It is easily worked, and can be brought to a smooth surface ; when stained, it reveals a pretty grain, and might be much more extensively employed than it is at present, in the manufacture of chairs, &c., for the benefit of those who cannot afford the luxury of a rosewood or walnut *suite*.

With all due respect for the turner's trade, it must occur to those who look on furniture with an artist's eye, that the forms it produces in our day are generally devoid of interest. The pear-shaped unit which is so often multiplied in the legs of our chairs and tables has neither strength nor beauty to recommend it, and might almost always be omitted with advantage. Yet the lathe, properly used, might become, and indeed once was, an efficient and perfectly legitimate means of decorating woodwork cheaply. In this, as in many other cases, it is not the appliances of manufacture which are wanting, but the design which should direct their employment.

Among the many fashions of the day which tend to unpicturesqueness, and expense without any corresponding advantages in point of comfort, is that of cutting out and fitting our carpets so as to exactly follow the plan-outline of the room. Yard upon yard of stuff is wasted in the earnest endeavour to cover up the floor in every recess occasioned by a window or the projection of a chimney breast. Nor is this all, for the carpet thus once laid down will not again fit any other room without a further sacrifice of material. This inconvenience might easily be avoided by allowing the carpet to assume the form of a simple parallelogram, not extending further in any direction than the inmost projections of the area. When carpets were first used, a broad margin of floor was thus left all around the room, and the effect, as we now sometimes see it in old country houses, is infinitely more telling than that of London drawing-rooms. It is true that modern deal flooring forms a poor substitute for the polished

oak once used; but good "floor-cloth," or a little of the staining fluid now so commonly employed in church wood-work, would meet this objection in ordinary houses, while borders of inlaid parquetry, for those who can afford it, would hardly involve more expense than the carpet itself.

While on this subject, I cannot refrain from alluding to the absurd practice which exists among certain people of shrouding up their furniture in chintz covering, and overlaying their Brussels carpets with common drugget. If the silk or damask with which their sofas and chairs are covered is actually of too delicate a fabric to endure ordinary wear, why use it at all? Besides, this undue thirstiness really defeats its own object. The richer material is exposed to hardly less friction when covered than when uncovered, and the consequence is that it is worn out without having been seen or appreciated on more than a score of *soirées*. In the same way a highly-polished surface of rosewood or Spanish mahogany is kept in order now-a-days, apparently for no other purpose but to reflect the features of the housemaid who rubs it over every morning. The white cloth is so seldom removed now before dessert, and the dining-table during the rest of the day is so carefully enveloped, that the festive board might as well be of deal, or at least of unpolished mahogany. It is not that people do not spend money enough about their houses, but that they do not spend it in the right direction. The sheen and polish which well-seasoned wood acquires by *actual use* is a good artistic quality, but the silky gloss produced by artificial varnishes and furniture paste is a meretricious prettiness which no true painter would care to represent. It is money wasted. The use of plate-glass in second-rate houses is another luxury, the cost of which might be frequently better applied. It renders the sash unduly heavy, and seen from the outside is exceedingly cold and ugly in its colour. The only real advantage to be derived from it is, apparently, that it affords greater facility for idle people to look out of window. But even this plea will not suffice in London, where it is chiefly confined to dining-room windows, the lower half of which alone commands a view of the street, and that half is almost always obscured by a wire screen.

It would not be difficult to multiply instances of lavish expenditure upon mere luxury, at the sacrifice of good design, and often of good workmanship. Wealth, of course, might always command a combination of these qualities; but if people of moderate resources had to choose between fashion and fitness of design, we fear the majority would declare in favour of the former. The eye, long accustomed to the conventional glitter of a Mayfair drawing-room, requires no little education before it can be brought to perceive that the forms by which it is surrounded might be varied at all with advantage. But that they should exchange their pseudo-elegance for the simplicity of outline which is the chief characteristic of good design, would seem unreasonable to many who flatter themselves that they possess "a taste." Yet it is only by such means that we can hope for a reformation in art manufacture. Let us first make our furni-

ture *serviceable*, laying aside the traditions of shape and ornament which have reached us in so perverted a manner. The best and most interesting form will generally be that which is suggested by expedience. When this *obvious* usefulness is rightly indicated, it will be time enough to think of elaboration.

It will be naturally asked how this change is to be brought about. Our national schools of art promised much, but have effected little. It is an inestimable advantage to the young designer that he should be able to draw the figure correctly, but if his skill only leads him to model athletic Cupids supporting candelabra, and twist little mermaids round the handle of a beer jng, he has not gained much by his experience. The pupil spends months in correctly copying the outlines of vegetable form. But this avails him little if he does not at the same time learn how to apply them judiciously; nor is it easy to find any system of instruction except that followed by architectural students of the best class, which at present may be relied on.

It is generally considered that the state of art manufacture in France is infinitely superior to our own, and, indeed, the fertility of invention and power of drawing which her workmen possess, throw our productions completely in the shade. But this facility is even more dangerous than our own ignorance. The eye is so fascinated by mere cleverness of execution that the purpose of the article designed, and the motive of the ornament introduced, are quite forgotten, and a meretricious extravagance is tolerated for its *own* sake, rather than for that of the object which it is supposed to decorate.

An attempt has been made by an association of young men—some of them painters—to form a new school of art furniture. Some result of their labours might be seen in the Mediæval Furniture court of the last Great Exhibition. Their specimens of tapestry, worked on the old principle, were justly admired by connoisseurs, but their woodwork chiefly depended for its beauty on the figure-painter's art. Cabinets and bookcases were covered from head to foot with that class of subjects and method of treatment which Mr. Rossetti was the first to introduce—admirably adapted to the purpose, it is true, but at once involving an amount of expense which no purchaser of ordinary means would care to incur. Our joiner's work ought to be artistic *in itself*, and produced at a price which the general public will pay, before we call in the painter's aid to please those who can afford a luxury.

The question, in short, still remains to be solved,—Shall we ever have an honest style of furniture again? Will any London tradesman take up the matter in something better than a mere commercial spirit, and set the example of reform? It is certain that to attain such an object he could command most valuable assistance from the artistic world, and, provided his goods were produced at a fair and marketable price, there is no doubt that they would, when known, secure for him an amply remunerative custom.

The Forest of Essex.

THERE is a tendency in all great cities to be continually stretching into the country; London is constantly going out of town. The process is a double one. There is the steady pushing out of house after house from the suburbs, to meet the needs of those whose means compel them to live within walking distance, or the conveyance of a cheap omnibus; and there is the London-related colony of wealthier men, to whom the use of ten miles of railway, or a four-horse coach, offers no pecuniary difficulty. Then follows the operation of joining the outlying settlement to the actual suburb, and when some public-spirited parishioner at the far end proposes gas and water, the subjugation of the country is complete.

This is a serious matter to the citizen. Some physiologists have gone so far as to declare that a family living continually in London would not prolong itself beyond three generations. Not but what the city of London is, for a city, remarkably healthy. The facilities for living without wear and tear, the reduction to a minimum of all friction as regards intercourse, and the ease with which money procures the necessaries and the comforts of life, all tend to the diminution of painful disease; but a constant canopy of burnt air and carbon-loaded cloud and human exhalation, a mixture and a medium through which the sun itself can hardly shine brightly,—in the sense of brightness as we think of it on the side of a Highland moor or a Surrey down,—cannot be sufficient for creatures whose lungs are planned to bring fresh air to deteriorated blood, in order that that blood may take in the freshness and let the foulness go.

It is a long time since the poet Cowley strengthened his image of a reverse to that which, even then, he called “the monster London,” by threatening that it—

A village less than Islington should be,
A solitude almost.

But the gradual obliteration of all the solitudes gives a gravity to the discussion which from time to time takes place with reference to the enclosure of what remains of Epping or Waltham Forest, that being itself a remnant of the original great forest which extended, in a desultory manner, over the larger part of the county of Essex.

The district now known as Epping Forest lies to the north and north-east of London, and comprises a series of woodland ranges which may be said to begin at Leytonstone, seven miles from London, and end at Epping, eight miles farther on; a tract on an average three or four miles wide, the wood being thickest about Loughton or Buckhurst Hill. In ancient times it would appear that the whole county was forestal, and the following

rhyming charter of Edward the Confessor, relating to a remoter part of it, is said to be taken from the Forest Rolls of Essex :—

Ic Edward Koming,
 Have yeven of my forest the keeping,
 Of the hundred of Chelmer and Dancing,
 To Randolph, Peperking, and his kindling,
 Wyth heose and hynde, doe and bock,
 Hare and foxe, cat and brocke,
 Wylde fowl with his flock,
 Partrich, fesant hen and fesant cock,
 Wyth green and wylde stob and stock,
 To keepen and to yemen by all her might,
 Both by day and eke by night.
 And hounds for to hold
 Good and swift, and bold ;
 Four greyhounds and six racches
 For hare and foxe and wilde cattes
 And therefor iche made him my broke,
 Witness the bishop Wolston
 And brooke ylerd many on,
 And Swein of Essex our brother
 And taken him many other,
 And our steward Howelin
 That by sought me for him.

This king is also said to have had a park at Havering, enclosing it from the forest. Tendring Hundred was disafforested by Stephen : all that part of the forest which lay to the north of the highway from Stortford to Colchester met with the same treatment at the hands of John ; and Henry III. allowed the making of another park at Theydon Mount, at the same time giving John de Lexington leave to hunt in what was still the forest of Essex. Then came another large enclosure for the great people at Theydon Garnon, but the Mountfitchets of Havering seem to have been hereditary grand wardens of the main forest so far back as Stephen. Then it passed to the De Clares ; from them, diminished to the wardenship of Epping Forest, to the Earls of Oxford ; but Henry VIII. took so kindly to it that the earl of the period surrendered his wardenship to the king for the time, in order that the royal hunter might have it all his own way. Elizabeth was like-minded with her father about it, and hunted in it constantly. King James gave it back to the Oxfords ; they conveyed it to the Exeters ; one of those earls in turn to the Earl of Lindsay, from whom it passed to Sir R. Child, and descended through the families of Tylney and of Long to the Earls of Mornington, with whose representative, if the office still exists, it must now be.

Those great people had elaborate staffs of officers under them. There were lieutenants and verderers, riding foresters, purlieu rangers, stewards master-keepers and regarders ; and Forest Courts, called Forty-day Courts, were held, at which all forestal questions were considered. Where enclosures were allowed the fences were kept low enough for the deer to leap ;

unauthorized dogs were sharply dealt with, and poachers, when they were caught, severely handled.

Nevertheless, through all these successive wardenships the forest portions of the county were gradually passing over into the class of reclaimed lands. The main road to it lay through the east end of London, through Whitechapel, and that Stratford atte Bowe, so celebrated for its French in Chaucer's time, one of whose heroines was

Taught at the schoole of Stratford atte Bowe,
Tho' French of Paris was to her unknowe.

The old bridge over the dividing river at Bow was, perhaps, one of the oldest stone arches in the country. Crossing it, the wayfarer gets on to a causeway across the marsh, where Danish boats are still sometimes dug out, and where the great sewer now passes with an almost Roman grandeur. This is a land of streams, as the names of the villages imply; for there is Old Ford, and Strat-ford or Straight-ford, and Il-ford, and Rom-ford or Rome-ford, Snares-brook, A-bridge, Chig-well Chingford, and Woodford.

It was, until recently, at one of the Stratford bridges—there are five within a mile—that the first trace of the old forest customs was found; by the demand of a toll from carts, &c., during one month in the year, to support the forest gaol at Stratford. And this toll was continued long after the gaol was pulled down, until it occurred to some malcontent that if he did not pay there was no prison to put him in, and with that discovery the custom ceased.

The Stuarts did a good deal of hunting in this forest; we still show the house where Charles II., using his sword for a carving-knife, patted the joint of beef with it and made it a Sir Loin. And in his father's time there seems to have been considerable anxiety as to whether the woods were not running away into the farmyards, and a solemn inquest was taken to determine boundaries. Forty gentlemen took a walk which looks all the more conducive to their healths from the too probable eating and drinking connected with it having slipped out of the record; but starting from Stratford bridge, called Bow, they glanced at West and East Ham, got to Ilford and Romford, came near there upon an exotic curiosity at “a certain quadrivium (or way leading four ways) called the four wants, where late was placed, and yet is, a certain side of a whale called the Whalebone.” And then they saw landmark after landmark, and looked up the various “meers, metes, bounds, and limits of the forest aforesaid,” until every man must have earned any amount of dinner, and we hear of them at Epping and Harlow, and then among the marshes of the Lea at Waltham Abbey, the monks of which were, at one time, large proprietors and lords of manors in the district; and so on “to a bridge called Lock bridge, now broken down, where now for passage is used Trajetus (a ferry), and from thence by the same river Lea” (which bounded at once the forest and the county), “to the fore-nominated bridge of Stratford Bow.”

The relation of the dwellers in the forest villages to the lords of the manors has always been a source of fruitful grievance, from the time when, without ceasing to be villeins, they grew into being poachers. In some of the manors the soil was vested in the squire, the Crown merely holding the right of feed and protection for the deer, and the people, or "commoners," claiming pasturage for cows and horses; but at Chingford there is a hunting lodge still standing, with tapestry yet hanging on its walls,

Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blows
His wreathed bugle horn,

which lodge belonged to Queen Elizabeth; and one day in gracious mood, she being Grand Warden by inheritance from her father, granted from it the privilege of wood-cutting (top-lapping) to the poor of the neighbouring parishes, "upon the tenor of observing the rule which she gave them, and which they were to retain as their charter; which was, to strike the axe into the boughs of the trees at the midnight of the 11th November in each year, so as to begin to cut the wood as nearly as possible between the 11th and 12th of that month only, after which they were to cut it, and bring it home at their pleasure throughout the season." The result of this may have been a benefit to the poor, though that is open to great doubt, but it was a source of constant irritation to those who inherited the respective manors. It is continued to this day in certain parishes, and the consequence is that such a thing as a real natural tree is hardly to be found.

It is very surprising in such a wood as Loughton, where there are more than a thousand acres of waste, and perhaps a million of trees, to note how not a single one escapes lopping. The visitor from London, walking there in the summer time when the lopping is not taking place, and there is nothing to call the villagers into the wood, is struck with the silence and the solitude; but if he begins to indulge any fancies about primeval wastes unspoiled by man, a glance at the trees will correct him. They are not, strictly speaking, trees at all, but strange, fantastic, vegetable abortions. Their trunks, seldom more than a foot or eighteen inches in diameter, are gnarled, writhed, and contorted; and at about six feet from the ground, just within reach of the axe, they spread into huge over-hanging crowns, from which spring branches which are cut every other year or so, and never long escape the spoiler; then, baffled in their natural instinct to grow into branches, the trees throw up spurs and whips from their roots, and every pollard stump—more or less rotten at the core—is surrounded with a belt of suckers and of sprew. Enchanted bands of Circe's transformed revellers, struggling Laocoons, Dantean forms in pitiless Infernos—the general effect, particularly in the season of wild-flowers, is something strangely weird and, in a sense, intensely beautiful, but it is no more nature's notion of primeval woodland than are closely cropped hair and shaven lip and chin her intention for the real expression of the human face.

Many attempts have been made to stop this top-lapping. The charter is, that the cutting shall begin at midnight of the 11th November. In the parish of Waltham, the villagers lost the privilege through a *ruse*. On the 11th November, 1641, the poor were invited to a general "drunk" and supper, and the programme was so well carried out, especially, perhaps, as regards the item of "drunk," that night came and went and no wood was cut; and when midnight of the 11th November, 1642, arrived, those who had provided the bygone supper took care to point out that no wood *could* be cut, and that the charter was forfeit. When the local historian of the district, who tells the story, adds, "This information the writer derived from an old manuscript book of the Pigbones (an ancient family of Waltham), the writer's grandmother being of that family," one begins to wonder whether Dryasdust is poking his fun, or the writers of the comic histories in *Punch* are annotating. Perhaps, in accordance with the development theory, the ancient Pigbones family of Waltham may have once enjoyed their forestal rights on all fours, and chiefly with a view to the consumption of beech-mast and acorns, until, rising into a grandmother capable of setting store by an ancient manuscript book, they have culminated into a learned and painstaking historian to whom the present writer is very much indebted.

In another manor this plan of a general "drunk" would not do. Tradition says there was a supper and, probably, some drunk, but that the bulk of those attending, although they snatched a fearful joy at the eatables and drunkables, had an eye to time and place. More than one man had brought his axe to supper with him, and when, at a quarter to twelve, an adjournment to the wood being proposed, all doors and windows were found to be unaccountably barred, brawny arms and sharpened axes made short work of the hindrances, and it is greatly to be regretted that there was no ancient Pigbones present on that occasion to do justice to a dramatic tableau, showing triumphant villagers, broken furniture, and a discomfited plotter picking himself up in the corner.

The connection of the Crown with these manors afforded a hope at one time, to those whose wishes went in that direction, that the keeping open of the "waste," as it is called, might be secured. In Hainault Forest, which adjoined that of Epping, the Crown had the right, over 290 acres, to the soil and timber, and the Commissioners of Woods have made such good use of this lordship that, after selling the timber, &c. for 42,000*l.* (it was a forest in which top-lapping had never been allowed), and setting off some compensation land and recreation ground for the commoners, they have brought land into cultivation, with the proceeds of that sale, which yields the country a rental of 4,000*l.* a year. But in other manors the Crown for many years past has owned nothing but the venison vert, that is, the pasture for deer; and it was hoped by the opponents of enclosures that by placing this right, which implied the maintenance of a very considerable breadth of open land, in opposition to the right of the lord of the manor, whose tendency was to

make grants from the waste, a compromise might have been effected and large tracts kept unenclosed. But practically it was found impossible to keep the deer. The woods were accessible everywhere, and intersected with many roads. A deer, of the small sort common to the forest, is easily noosed and quickly killed, then tossed into the tail of a cart, in an hour it is in London. Or, since the deer preferred the garden produce of the cottager to the pasture of the wood, and browsed conveniently in the dusk, the head, the umbles, and the skin, manured the garden, and the royal haunch saved butcher's meat until another haunch was ready. Under these circumstances, the creatures being missing, the Commissioners evidently thought that it would not do to make too much fuss about their pasture, and that the best thing they could do would be to sell it. This they did in more than one manor, and retired; leaving the lord of the manor (who is lord of the soil), and the copyholders and freeholders (who claim certain rights of pasturage, top-lapping, fern-cutting, &c.) Grants are now made through the machinery of the Copyhold Courts, upon condition of fines and annual quit-rents, and as these are redeemable by the tenant under the Enfranchisement Act, the grants can be converted into freeholds.

The process is a painful one for the citizen to watch, no doubt. It always has been. It is many years ago since Cobbett put his bitter query,—

It has not been a thing uncommon,
To steal a goose from off a common;
But what shall be that man's excuse
Who steals the common from the goose?

And although a goose has never been a commonable creature in our forests, because its broad flat foot spoils the pasture for the deer, the pungency of the question remains. Mr. Barnes, too, in more recent times has recorded the grave belief of the Dorset countryman that

The goocoo wull soon be committed to cage,
Vor a trespass in zomebody's tree;

but, of course, law, property, and sound political economy, have something to say on the other side.

It is quite clear that at the time these forests were maintained as open wastes by the early Plantagenet kings to whom they belonged, they were not kept so for the enjoyment of the Londoners. A ruralizing cockney in those days would have been classified with poachers, and sent back maimed, like other vermin; nor where the right of the soil was conceded to individuals can we find any reservation in favour of excursionists. The demand for land, and the value of it for building sites, is rapidly increasing, but there is still so much unenclosed that it might be possible, and desirable, to secure a park for the people in this locality; and if a thickly wooded part were selected, the land drained, the wood judiciously thinned, and no suggestion of gardening introduced, as in the London parks, by shrubs or flowers, a natural, and in a sense a primeval, character might gradually be attained, which would be infinitely better for all per-

sons concerned than the present distorted scrubiness, unwholesome swamp, and noisy licence which is not liberty.

The historical associations of our district, if not pre-eminent, are highly respectable. It would appear that we were Trinobantes before we were anything else. Caractacus had a good deal to do with us, and Boadicea was finally beaten "somewhere between Epping and Waltham." Then we had kings of Essex in the Saxon times, and Mellitus, the friend of St. Augustin, was our first bishop. Since then we have suffered in the cause of faith by giving, in Mary's reign, nineteen persons (seven of them women) to be burnt; and seven of the greater monasteries were suppressed from out our county. In things relating more especially to wood-craft and sylvan lore we are not particularly strong. The "Ancient Foresters" that have, from time to time, come down to us—from London, by the excursion trains—are hardly to be distinguished from "Odd Fellows;" whilst for Robin Hood we have only Dick Turpin, and although he would sometimes tell an old woman or a poor man that "the moon was up," or give them some such other password, to protect them from his band, Turpin was a sorry substitute for the Sherwood forester. We have traces of the Romans still amongst us, in certain potsherds, coins and ornaments which turn up beneath our spades, and perhaps they made or used a high ridgeway through the woods, still used by us. Ambersbury Banks, near Epping, was certainly once a fortified camp, and in one or two families of the poor the blue black hair, a certain squareness of build, and a peculiar manner in which the women carry their heads, suggest the old dominant race very strongly. Queen Elizabeth was constantly in our neighbourhood, and we believe, of course, that Shakspeare came hunting in her train, or as companion to some of her nobles. The Earls of Dorset, although they took their second title of "Buckhurst" from Sussex, and not from the Buckhurst Hill in our county, had a home among us, and poetry was written there of the right ring. Then George Herbert lived for a while at Woodford for the benefit of his health, and in modern days Tennyson has passed a good deal of his time in our midst. There are many thickets in our neighbourhood, "where Claribel low lieth." At Christmas eve we hear "four voices from four hamlets round," and although the "Ode to Memory" must have been written mainly of Lincolnshire, our brooks—too few, alas, and far between—reveal that which we would fain desire this article to present and be—

The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-land.

Notes of the late Campaign on the Punjab Frontier.

In the autumn of 1863, a force was ordered to assemble in the Yusufzi country, north-east of Peshawur, for the purpose of chastising the Hindustanee fanatics, who have for years past infested the hills on the right bank of the Indus. These fanatics were descendants of the followers of the Syud Ahmed, of Bareilly, who some forty years ago headed an expedition, in which the neighbouring hill-tribes of Yusufzi joined him, against the Sikhs. Those of his followers who survived the defeat they then met with, and a subsequent general massacre of their fellows by the Yusufzi people, found a refuge at Satanah on the Mahabun,* a mountain on the right bank of the Indus. Here they were joined from time to time—and especially during the Mutiny of 1857—by many adventurers, outlaws, and discontented subjects of the British Crown. Their constant depredations on the frontier caused an expedition to be undertaken for their punishment in 1858 by Sir Sydney Cotton, who drove them from Satanah and razed their dwellings to the ground.

They then retired further into the interior of the mountain fastnesses, and settled at Mulkah, on a northern spur of the Mahabun range, where they seem to have thought themselves beyond the reach of British power. During the last four years, and particularly since the commencement of 1863, they have made frequent raids into British territory, attacking the frontier villages, and slaying, or carrying off for the sake of ransom, the peaceful subjects of her Majesty. These fanatics have never engaged in agricultural pursuits, being well supplied with money by sympathizers in the plains of India.

The following troops assembled in Yusufzi in October, 1863, to take part in the expedition against Mulkah:—The 71st Highland Light Infantry, the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers, C Battery 19th Brigade Royal Artillery, the Hazara Mountain Train (two 3-lb. guns and two 12-lb. howitzers), the Peshawur Mountain Train, 100 sabres 11th Bengal Cavalry, 100 sabres Guide Cavalry, the 1st Punjab Infantry, the 3rd Punjab Infantry, the 5th Punjab Infantry, the 6th Punjab Infantry, 20th Native Infantry, 32nd Native Infantry, the 5th Goorkhas, the Guide Infantry, and two companies of Sappers and Miners.

Colonel Reynell Taylor, C.B., officiating Commissioner of Peshawur, accompanied the force as her Majesty's Commissioner. The Staff consisted of Major T. Wright, deputy adjutant-general; Lieutenant-Colonel G.

* i.e. "The great forest." The highest peak is about 7,800 feet above the level of the sea.

Allgood, deputy quartermaster-general ; Lieutenant Mackenzie, staff officer, Punjab Irregular Force; Major Harding, orderly officer ; Lieutenant Jarrett ; Major Johnstone ; Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, C.B., Royal Engineers ; Captain Tulloh, commanding Royal Artillery. The Rev. J. Löwenthal, of the American Presbyterian Mission, officiated as chaplain with the force, until the arrival of the Rev. W. G. Cowie from the Viceroy's camp at Meean Meer.

On the 19th October, a column under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde, C.B. (of the Guides), left Naokilla at 9 P.M. for Machlee, and there joined a force under Major Keyes, which had marched by a different route. Keyes had, as a feint, threatened the Chinglai Pass (by which Sir Sydney Cotton advanced in 1858), in order to draw off the attention of the Boneyr tribes, and also to separate them from the Hindustanees, whilst the main force made its way close to the Boneyr territory *vid* the Umbeyla Pass and the Chunla Valley, so as to come down from the north-west on the stronghold of the fanatics, and drive them towards the frontier.

The Boneyrwals (as the people of this tribe are called) quoted this piece of strategy against us afterwards, in justification of their conduct in opposing our march along the borders of their territory. They asked why we should have practised such deceit, if our object in entering their territory without first obtaining, or even asking their permission, was not to invade and take possession of their country ? It is indeed difficult to justify this part of our conduct ; for we had no more right to lead a force through the Umbeyla Pass without the sanction of the Boneyr tribes, than the Emperor of the French would have to march an army without leave across the States of Germany.

The two columns which had united at Machlee marched on together to Rustum * (five miles), where they halted till daylight on the 20th, when they proceeded up the Umbeyla Pass, reaching the top of it about 3.30 P.M. The original plan had been that they should halt the first day at Khoga, six miles farther on ; but the march up the pass proved to be much longer and more difficult than was anticipated. Indeed, the mules had to be unladen at different parts of the route to enable them to get along, and it was wonderful how the elephants, with the light field-guns on their backs, managed to travel over the road at all. The whole of the baggage was not up until the 24th.

The rest of the force, commanded by Sir Neville Chamberlain in person, began to arrive at the head of the pass on the afternoon of the 20th, but it was 10 P.M. before the whole had reached the top.

The whole force bivouacked for the night on the crest of the pass looking towards the Chunla Valley. The European troops had started with only half a day's rations in their havresacks, and no more food was issued to them till next morning. The native troops were better supplied, having brought a whole day's rations with them.

* A dépôt for the sick and for commissariat supplies, &c., was established here.

During the night of the 21st, a few shots were exchanged between our pickets and the enemy. Next day Lieutenant-Colonel Probyn, of the 11th Bengal Cavalry, went out to reconnoitre along the Chumla Valley, supported by the 20th Native Infantry. On his advance he met with no opposition, but rather with courtesy, from the people of the neighbouring village of Umbeyla; but on his return, his men were fired at by people at or near the village, when he charged and killed a few of them. The 32nd Punjabees (pioneers) were sent out to assist him, and the rest of the force stood to their arms in case of need. The Boneyrvals (who had hitherto been supposed friendly to us) followed our men back to the pass, and after dark kept up a random fire on our position. Lieutenant Gillies, of the Hazara Mountain Train, was killed by a chance shot while standing by his guns about 9 p.m. During the night the enemy came straight up to our breastwork, and one of them leapt over it, and wounded Lieutenant Brown, of the Engineers. The nature of the ground, and the confined space in which the troops were, did not admit of tents being pitched; fortunately however the weather was fine. Three men were killed and twenty-three wounded, during the day and night.

It now became clear that the force would have to contend with the Boneyr and other tribes, as well as with the fanatics whose punishment was the object of the expedition, and some modification in the original plan of operations became necessary.

October 23rd and 24th were spent in fortifying our position in the crest of the pass with sungas (breastworks of large stones).

On the 25th October, Major Keyes captured a rocky mound to the right of our position, looking towards Chumla, which was afterwards known as the "Conical Hill." It is about 150 feet high, rising abruptly from a plateau 250 yards across from our nearest picket. The enemy vacated their defences on the crest of the hill before our people could get at them, but not till Lieutenant Pemberton, of the Peshawur Mountain Train, had, with his first shell, knocked over three men and a standard on the top of the hill. This movement of Keyes was in anticipation of an attack on his picket by the enemy in great force. They had discovered that the regiment which held the picket (called the "Crag") during the night, was always withdrawn in the morning, only a few men being left to guard it during the day. They accordingly planned a surprise, intending to rush up and take the Crag just after Keyes had gone back to his camp. Keyes was just about to march his regiment off as usual that morning, when he heard the cries of a syce (or native groom) who had fallen into the enemy's hands, and was being killed by them. Their impatience to shed blood thus frustrated their designs; for Keyes was led to examine the place where the cries came from, and soon discovered that the enemy were there in great force. Keyes lost only one man (wounded) in this brilliant exploit. The troops principally engaged were the Peshawur Mountain Train, some marksmen of the 71st and 101st, the 1st Punjabees, and 5th Goorkhas. The fighting was all over at 2 p.m.

The enemy having also during the day vacated the "Eagle's Nest," a post which they had held on the left of our camp, it was occupied shortly after daybreak on the 26th by about seventy marksmen of the 71st and 101st, under Captain Butler, V.C., of the 101st; eighty men of the 20th Native Infantry, under Lieutenant Richmond; fifty of the 6th Punjab Infantry, under Captain Hoste (who was afterwards relieved by Captain Rogers, of the 20th Native Infantry), and a few of the 3rd Punjab Infantry, the whole under Major Brownlow. At about 10 A.M., the Hazara Mountain Train, 200 of the 71st Highlanders, and the 5th and 6th Punjab Infantry, all under Lieutenant-Colonel Vaughan, were sent up to the left of the Eagle's Nest, to take off the attention of the enemy from a convoy of sick and wounded proceeding down the Umbeyla Pass, *en route* for Rustum in the rear.

From the foot of the Eagle's Nest the ground was level for about eighty yards to the base of a wooded hill fronting the Nest and overlooking Vaughan's post. About noon the Boneyrvals, who had been observed on this hill all the morning, began to advance towards the Eagle's Nest. They did this with admirable skill, the matchlockmen posting themselves under cover in the wood, and pouring in a destructive fire, while the swordsmen came forward boldly across the level to the charge, actually planting their standards within a few yards of the breastwork. Vaughan diverted their attention for awhile, ordering the 6th Punjab Infantry to advance against them in skirmishing order. This was done in gallant style, and the enemy were driven off with great loss. When the Punjabees retired to their position again, the enemy made another dashing assault on the Eagle's Nest, but were finally repulsed in spite of their great bravery, the marksmen of the 71st and 101st doing splendid service. At the Eagle's Nest, Lieutenant G. Richmond and thirteen men were killed, and thirty-six of all ranks wounded. Lieutenant Clifford was killed while heading a sally against the enemy from a position among the rocks below the Nest. Our total casualties this day amounted to upwards of 100; those of the 28th Native Infantry being twenty-three, and those of the 6th Punjab Infantry fifty-four. Two officers, Lieutenants Drake and Barrow, were wounded.

On the 27th two 24-lb. howitzers, under Captain Salt, and the 14th (Ferozepore) Native Infantry, under Major C. C. Ross, joined the force, which was further increased on the 29th by the 4th Goorkhas, under Captain Chester.

Early on the 30th the enemy attacked and took the Crag picket on the right of our position, then held during the day by a havildar and twelve men. Major Keyes went up at once with the 1st Punjabees, and retook the post before 6 A.M. The capture by the enemy took place before it was light, so that our people did not know what force was opposed to them. Major Keyes lost two fingers in this fight. The enemy left about sixty killed (chiefly Hindustanees) round about the Crag. At the same time the enemy were driven off from the front, which they had

attacked simultaneously with the Crag, chiefly by the 5th Goorkhas, who behaved with their usual gallantry. The enemy came up so close to Griffin's guns, that a gunner knocked one of them down with a blow on the head from his rammer. Our loss during the day was eleven killed and thirty-five wounded. The fighting was over by 10 A.M., but firing on both sides continued all day. The enemy lost forty-six dead in front of our lower sunga, and at least 150 altogether about the position. They must have carried off a great many more. All was quiet after this till the 6th of November.

Working parties had been for some days employed in making a zigzag road up the face of the hill to the right of our position, to open communication with Pamouli, where a standing camp of reserve was established. On the 6th, Major Harding commanded the covering party, which consisted of some of the 71st Highlanders, under Captain Mounsey, and some of the 20th Native Infantry, under Lieutenant Rogers. About midday, the working party returned to camp; but Harding, not having received a definite order to retire with them, remained where he was. The enemy, seeing his predicament, began by degrees to surround him. About three in the afternoon, the Peshawur Mountain Train went out about a mile beyond the outposts to aid in keeping off the enemy, and helping him to retire. It would appear that poor Harding could not make up his mind to come away and leave his dead and wounded to fall into the hands of the enemy, and so at last his party became completely surrounded, and he himself was killed. The men of his party kept coming into camp during the night. Lieutenant Oliphant, of the 5th Goorkhas, and Lieutenant Battye, of the Guides, were brought in wounded. Ensign Murray, of the 71st, and Lieutenant Dougal, of the 79th,* were missing. Private Rogers, V.C., of the 71st, was out all night, concealed under a bush. Two detachments of the enemy passed within a few yards of him. One man in each detachment carried a light to direct the others, who appeared to Rogers to be engaged in carrying off their dead. Rogers got back to camp early in the morning, and declares that the challenge he received on reaching our breastworks was the sweetest sound he ever heard in all his life.

Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde went out at dawn on the 7th with a strong force to recover the bodies of our people. Fifty-two were found; amongst them, three officers, one sergeant, and three privates of the European regiments. It was supposed that the enemy had only lost about thirty killed, while our casualties in all amounted to eighty. After this all was quiet again—with the exception of the usual complimentary exchange of shots between our pickets and the enemy—till the 12th, when the enemy were collected in large masses during the day, threatening our whole line of defences. At 10 P.M., Major Brownlow, on the Crag, sounded "commence firing." The Crag was defended that night by 100 of the 20th, Lieutenant Fosbery and

* A volunteer with the 71st.

fifteen marksmen of the 101st, and about twenty men of the 14th Native Infantry. It had been agreed beforehand that, when Brownlow sounded "commence firing," the Peshawur Mountain Train in the main picket should shell the enemy. There were constant attacks made all night, which were repulsed by Brownlow's men and the mountain train. One native was killed and four wounded in the Crag. Towards daylight the enemy retired for a short time, but about 9 A.M. they came on again in greater force than ever. The picket in the Crag had been relieved in the meantime, and it was now held by Captain J. P. Davidson, of the 1st Punjab Infantry, with 100 of his men, part of the 14th Native Infantry, and the European marksmen still left there. At ten the Crag was taken by the enemy, Davidson dying nobly at his post; but our people still held Keyes' picket till the 101st and the rest of the 14th Native Infantry came up. The latter made a gallant attempt to retake the Crag, but were too weak, and were obliged to retire, when the 101st advanced and drove the enemy out. The 1st Punjabees lost on this occasion 105, the Peshawur Train eight, and the 14th Native Infantry about fifty killed and wounded. Among the latter was Lieutenant Pitcher. A Boneyr man, after peace was made, told us that he was engaged in this attack; and, describing Davidson's appearance exactly, said that the sahib had given them much trouble, and was a terrible fellow to encounter. He had observed him fighting alone in one part of the Crag, and saw him wounded in the forehead with a spear after he had killed two of the enemy with his own hand.

Things now remained quiet till the 18th November, when, the road having been made so as to keep up our communication with Pamouli, the camp was moved from the gorge, the left being abandoned altogether, and a new position taken up on the right hill looking down the Chumla Valley. Our force moved across to the right without firing a shot—a most difficult operation, considering the nature and extent of the ground covered.

When the enemy found our left deserted, they thought we were retiring altogether, and came rushing up the Chumla Valley into the gorge till they were checked by Griffin's guns. They attacked and carried the lower picket at 11 A.M., but it was retaken at once by the 14th Native Infantry and the 5th Goorkhas. They then made successive attacks, with increased numbers, till four o'clock, when the position was relinquished, the enemy being on all sides. The 14th Native Infantry, who at first held the picket alone, lost Lieutenant Mosley and thirty-four men killed, and fifty-one wounded, out of 135 engaged. The company of the 71st which came to their assistance lost two officers killed—Captain C. F. Smith, 71st, Lieutenant T. S. Jones, 79th*—and ten men killed and wounded. The 101st, out of fifteen men engaged, lost their adjutant, Lieutenant H. H. Chapman, killed, and six men killed and wounded. The 5th Goorkhas lost nine killed and six wounded. Chapman had been sent with a message to Major Ross, commanding the 14th Native Infantry, who asked him

* Volunteer with the 71st.

to remain with him. Chapman did so, and seeing Captain Smith on the ground badly wounded, went to help him, and while thus engaged was himself shot. The generous fellow begged Major Ross to get Captain Smith carried off, and not to mind *him*, as he knew he was mortally wounded. Mosley, after his party had fired away all their ammunition, leapt over the breastwork with his remaining men, and charged into the enemy. The enemy retired again from the picket at nightfall. Major Ross and Lieutenant Inglis were wounded.

On the 19th Captain Aldridge, of the 71st, was shot dead whilst posting sentries in the Water picket. Two of his men were killed, and Lieutenant Stockley, of the 101st, was wounded, at the same time. This was a point in the same range as the Crag, taking its name from covering the water down below. The enemy's advanced breastwork was about 200 yards to the right on the same hill.

The enemy were seen collecting in force early in the morning of the 20th, keeping up a heavy matchlock fire on the Crag. They were checked by shells from the Peshawur Mountain Train until 3 P.M., when they succeeded in taking the Crag* from 100 of the 101st and fifty of the 20th Native Infantry. Ensign Sanderson and Dr. Pile, of the 101st, fell there at their posts. The enemy then commenced firing down on the camp and throwing over large stones. Every gun in camp was brought to bear on them, and they were kept from advancing beyond it. Sir Neville Chamberlain—always at the post of danger—accompanied the 71st and 5th Punjabees in their advance up the hill to retake the Crag, which was most gallantly done,—Lieutenant Beckett, of the 5th, being the first man into the Crag. Colonel Hope, of the 71st, was wounded in the leg whilst showing his regiment the way; and Sir Neville himself was so badly hurt in the arm as to be compelled to resign his command. The enemy's loss was not ascertained; but it is supposed to have been severe, as they were for half an hour under fire from our guns. Our total casualties this day were 130. Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde, of the Guides, now assumed the command, pending the arrival of Major-General Garvoch, who took command on the 30th. Meanwhile, a telegram was received from Sir Hugh Rose, announcing that Lieutenant Beckett had been rewarded for his conduct, and expressing the Commander-in-Chief's satisfaction at the gallantry displayed by all in the recapture of the Crag.

All was quiet now for some days; but the Crag picket being separated from the enemy's most advanced picket only by a dip in the hill, a man had only to show his head over our breastwork, to be saluted by a shower of bullets from the enemy. Now and then a Minié ball would come from the ammunition captured by the enemy on the 20th. On the other hand the Afghans in our service often interchanged courtesies and "chaff" with their brethren in the opposite ranks. The day after the Crag picket

* The Crag was the key of the position, being about 700 feet above the new camp.

was captured by them, one of our people said to his countryman on the other side, a sharpshooter at the advanced post of the enemy, " You don't call that shooting, do you ? Your bullets come a mile too high." " Yes," replied the fellow, " I can't do anything to-day, with this stupid rifle which I took from your picket yesterday." On one occasion one of our Afghans called out to the enemy, behind some neighbouring rocks, " Let us have a song." " Very good," they replied; and both sides commenced singing some well-known national ballad, verse about, first the enemy, and then our people. As soon as they had finished, the pickets on both sides started up, and blazed into one another with their muskets ! In this war, sons on one side have fought against their fathers on the other, and brothers have often met in the midst of the fray, and cut one another down. After one of the earlier fights, an orderly of Colonel Probyn's went over the field of battle to look at the dead, and amongst them recognized the body of his own father.

From a large rock across the valley, about 700 yards from camp, a fellow whom our men call Peter used to fire at us from morning till night. Poor fellow ! he had lost three sons in the war, and was nearly mad in consequence. Three of his friends constantly attended him, to prevent him from walking across into our camp; consoling him by telling him, on every discharge of his gun, that he had killed an infidel.

After the 18th, the 71st and 101st took it in turns on alternate days to defend the heights, the whole regiment going on duty together for twenty-four hours. The nights became bitterly cold, and even at mid-day the mountain breezes cut like a knife. No tents could, of course, be taken up to the heights, and men and officers fared alike, as was only right. They made themselves as warm as they could by huddling together in their great-coats and under their blankets ; and to show how precious such comforts had become, it may be stated that at a sale of the effects of officers killed on the 20th, an old blanket full of holes went for thirty-two shillings, whilst a new full-dress hat with gold lace and plume, in a tin case, was sold for ten shillings. Two of the commonest kind of plates fetched four shillings.

When feeling cold at night in camp, it would almost make one warmer to think of the men on duty on the top of the Crag, or of the enemy in their blue cotton coats, shivering on the hill-side. Still, all uncovered as they were in the pouring rain on the night of the 7th, they managed to send a few shots into the camp about eleven o'clock. It was pitch dark, and the rain coming down as if from a spout. Four hundred daring swordsmen might have caused immense confusion, and inflicted endless loss, if they had jumped over our defences and slashed about amongst us ; for, in the dark, and crowded as the camp was, we could not have distinguished friend from foe.

The letter-bag from our camp was never captured by the enemy, but great fears were entertained for it every day. The mounted postman, armed to the teeth, could only go at a foot's pace, on account of the

unmade state of the path, and the constant presence in the neighbourhood of the enemy's sharpshooters.

The 7th Fusiliers—Colonel Shipley in command—came into camp on the 5th of December, looking as clean and fresh after their long march uphill as if they had just turned out for an inspection. They are supplied with drab canvas coats, worn over the regular uniform, rendering the men almost invisible at a little distance. The 93rd Highlanders joined on the 9th, toiling up the hill through the rain, which came down incessantly. Their baggage arrived next day, having had rather a narrow escape of falling into the enemy's hands. Meanwhile preparations had been made for the advance to Mulkah. Sick and weakly men were sent back to the plains on the 6th, in order to enable the force to move rapidly. All superfluous baggage was discarded, one mule only being allowed to two officers, seven to a hundred European soldiers, and five to as many native troops, no one animal to carry more than 200 lb. weight.

The Boneyrvals now sent in a deputation of their principal men to say that the tribes were willing to make peace with us. They had seen 400 cavalry under Colonel Probyn come up the hill—200 men of the 11th, and 200 of the Guides; and this addition to our force probably brought the Boneyr people to their senses. For several days we went on treating with them, and soldiers now began to fear that the campaign would be "spoilt" by the politicals. The 93rd were anxious to have "just one roosh at the beggars" on the level before it was all over. On the 14th, the Boneyr tribe withdrew from the number of our foes, and the advance became comparatively easy.

On the morning of the 15th a column was formed in two brigades—the first, under Colonel W. Turner (of H.M.'s 97th. Regiment), consisting of the 7th Fusiliers, the Hazara Train, the 3rd Punjabees, 4th Goorkhas, and 23rd and 32nd Muzbees; the second, under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde, consisting of the 101st Fusiliers, the Peshawur Train, the 3rd Sikhs, 5th Goorkhas, and the Guides. The 1st brigade crossed the hill to the north-east of the camp, passing under the Water picket in the direction of Laloo, a village of the fanatics, situated on the top of another hill about four miles off. The 2nd brigade took a more northerly direction under the Crag picket, towards the Conical Hill, which was taken by Major Keyes on the 25th October, but which had been since abandoned by us. At 10 A.M., the 2nd brigade were within shot of the enemy, and the guns of the Hazara Train commenced shelling their position on the cone. The bugles of the 101st sounded the advance, and away went the line down the slope and across about 200 yards of the level. They re-formed at the foot of the cone, the side of which was composed of large loose boulders, with a strong breastwork at the top full of the enemy, and, clambering up the rocks, rushed into the defences. Most of the occupants fled when they saw the 101st "meant it," only a few daring fellows stood—to the last—firing and rolling down rocks on them. A standard was captured, which was fixed on the summit of the position.

On it was embroidered in Persian,—“He who prays to God before battle shall obtain victory.”

Meanwhile the 1st brigade had advanced on the right and had taken and set fire to the village of Laloo. The foe were in no hurry to leave the heights, but fired on us incessantly as they descended into the Chumla Valley. A wing of the 101st was ordered back to near the Crag, as the enemy threatened to make an effort to cut off the column from the camp. The 3rd Sikhs and 5th Goorkhas made a most spirited attack on a breast-work, from behind which the enemy were firing at our people, and made them scud away from rock to rock, down the hill on the left. About the same time the gallant Keyes made a splendid dash at another body of brave fellows. His regiment, the 1st Punjabees, or Coke-ke-pultun, as they are called from his famous predecessor, had eight killed and fourteen wounded in this affair, which terminated the serious fighting of the day. Crowds of the men in blue with matchlocks, spears, and standards, were seen streaming back to Umbeyla from every part of the range which we had traversed. Our total casualties amounted to fourteen killed and sixty wounded. No officers were hurt. According to a moderate computation, four hundred of the enemy were killed, and as many wounded. The troops remained in their several positions for the night.

Next morning the column moved about nine, the 1st brigade taking a circuit of a crescent-shaped ridge to the right, so as to enter the valley opposite the village of Umbeyla; the 2nd directing their course straight down to a point in the valley about a mile south of Umbeyla, winding in and out in single file over rocks, down nullahs, through forest and brushwood. The enemy were observed crowding the lower hills above the valley on the other side in a defiant manner, with innumerable triangular standards, red, black, and white, planted among the trees. A halt by the side of a rivulet—a torrent, no doubt, in the rainy season—refreshed both men and officers, while the column was being got together after the difficulty of the descent, and the guns were coming up. Probyn's men were seen leading their horses down the hill, between the two brigades. The field-guns not being up by half-past twelve, the general determined to go on without them. The 2nd brigade was formed for the attack of a hill in its front. When the advance was sounded, our fellows dashed up and clambered into the fortified post, just in time to see the last of the enemy rushing up the hill to the left. The village of Umbeyla was soon in flames, Probyn's cavalry having set fire to it. The 1st brigade having now descended into the valley, formed up at the foot of the hills, and swept across the plain at a rapid pace towards the enemy. The 23rd and 32nd Muzbees were in front, supported by four companies of the 7th Fusiliers. As they went on, leaving the burning village on their right, the ravines prevented the cavalry from covering their flanks. A few volleys were sent into the supposed cover of the enemy; when out of a ravine dashed some 250 blue-clad fanatics, in the most gallant style, waving their banners and brandishing their swords. The 2nd brigade on

the hill rent the air with shouts of encouragement. The Muzbees were checked for a moment by the desperate advance of the enemy; but went forward again like a whirlwind, leaving a long trail of bodies behind them, as they bore back the brave enemy by main force, leaving the disappointed 7th nothing to do. Lieutenant Alexander was killed, and Captain Charles Chamberlain (commanding the 23rd), Lieutenant Nott, Major Wheler, Lieutenant Marsh, and thirty-two rank and file wounded. The whole encounter scarcely lasted ten minutes, and yet 200 of the enemy lay upon the ground! They were all said to be Hindustanees.

After this fight was over, all that could be done was to fire shot and shell at the enemy as they retreated up the hill toward the Boneyr Pass. The firing ceased about half-past four, and the troops, after taking up their positions for the night, set to work with a will to cut wood for the bivouac. Very cold it was. Some of the officers had their great-coats; but the men, poor fellows! had parted with theirs in the morning; and few, tired though they were, attempted to sleep on the cold rocky ground in the heavy dew. They crouched or stood round the fires all night, gossiping and joking, maintaining the character of the British soldier for being jolly under the most trying circumstances.

After this the Boneyrwals showed that they really meant peace, and agreed to our terms, giving their chiefs as hostages, and engaging to assist in destroying Mulkah. Some of their chiefs accordingly accompanied Colonel Taylor and the Guides to Mulkah, and used their influence in preventing further hostilities, while the stronghold of the fanatics was levelled with the ground.

A field-force order was published on the 23rd December, announcing that "the enemy had been completely beaten in the open field, and had acknowledged his defeat by unconditional submission, and unhesitating acceptance of the terms imposed upon him by her Majesty's Commissioner, and that he had himself at our dictation levelled Mulkah with the ground—the mountain stronghold of the Hindustanee fanatics, which it was the primary object of the expedition to destroy." This order also expressed to officers and men the Commander-in-Chief's "entire approbation of their endurance of hardship, and of their good and gallant conduct."

On the 26th, a brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde started to exact hostages from the Judoon and Othmanzi tribes, who had broken the agreement they made with Sir Sydney Cotton in 1858, by allowing the fanatics to return to Satanah. After this has been done, the force will return to the plains and go into quarters.

Margaret Denzil's History.

(Annotated by her Husband.)

CHAPTER XIII.

LISABETH'S LETTER.



HEN we got home, it appeared to me that we had been absent not five weeks, but five years. I seemed to have lived so long since old Lisabeth curtseyed her good-by at the gate, that when she came out to curtsey a welcome home again it was a surprise to me that she had not changed. And so with everything in the house. I found myself wandering from room to room, gazing on this and touching that, as one might do who had been carried back into another period of existence, once

familiar but now dead and strange. And, fortunately, neither madame nor her daughter had any inclination to talk that evening; for what they did say sounded to my ears like the conversation of those forlorn old women who chatter in Monday morning's empty church, while they clean it. Everybody knows what it is when silence seems to be condensed into a wall before the doors of his lips, so that they *cannot* open, and thus it was with me. I declare that when, on my way upstairs to rest that night, I went into the schoolroom, and opened the old tall cabinet piano there, and touched the keys which had tortured my fingers when they were so very small, I did not expect any answering sound. That was because I myself felt so distant and ghostlike. However, sounds came; but as they were only my old "first lessons" that I played, and bits of improvised wandering which began and ended with no more method than the wind had which swept through the boughs without, there was nothing in them to alter my mood. More or less, the old music and the new was all about a life which had ceased, and another which had commenced—

dim, doubtful, little understood by the heart which prophesied it—namely, my own.

Here Lisabeth found me—standing before the piano in the bare cold schoolroom, whose darkness was only awakened to a drowsy gloom by my chamber candle. Lisabeth was very old, but she was straight and comely, with all the severe though homely dignity which one would expect to find in a picture of “The Burgomaster’s Mother.” She came in so quietly that I was unaware of her presence till she stood at my side. Not that she startled me, as she might have done if my mind had not been so far gone in the way which leads out of the world of fact into the world of dreams.

Lisabeth was never in a hurry to speak; and now she stood gravely silent, and I took no notice of her, for several moments. At last she said,—

“I’ve heard about the accident.”

“Yes,” said I, still playing in a one-handed way.

“I’ve heard about it, what they tell me, and I can’t say but what it makes me uneasy—very uneasy. Our madame and Miss Charlotte say it’s not much, and I don’t like to be inquisitive. But you were there, my dear—*Is it?*”

“The injury is not dangerous.”

“Is that what the doctor says, child?”

“I believe so.”

“Believing don’t go far. Who’s tending him?”

“Nobody, Lisabeth. He’s in an hotel, that’s all.” And I looked at her, red and confused; and she looked at me, grey and suspicious.

“You’re not deceiving of me,” she whispered; “you don’t mean hospital?”

“Indeed I do not.”

“Because when he was here last he looked more like the workhouse! Well,” she added, “I see what *you* think about it, and I don’t mind telling you, though I’ve lived near forty years in our madame’s service, that I don’t approve of unkindness between flesh and blood. And I’ve a mighty good mind to go and tend him myself!”

Therewith, Lisabeth stalked out of the room as she came in—erect and severe.

This little speech of hers sent me to rest half rested. Naturally, I was no longer at ease with madame and her daughter. It seemed to me that we could never be familiar again—or not for a long time to come; but perhaps I could talk with Lisabeth, and Lisabeth with me, and that would be something. She might advise me what to do if I could not remain at Valley House. Mr. Denzil had said my school-days were nearly over, and I felt now, when I shut down the piano upon my jangling old exercises, that those days were already past.

And so they were, in effect. Before school had assembled again—that is to say, a day or two after our arrival at home—madame handed me a

letter from Mr. Denzil, from which it appeared that I was to be merely a pupil no longer. I copy this letter in fairness to him; for it is a kind, generous letter, and puts his conduct in an honest light, as I would always have it seen; notwithstanding what has happened miserably to me.

MY DEAR MARGARET—

I DON'T know what you may think, but I feel that we were all out of gear at Brighton. Don't you think me cross, or meddling, or wanting to be tyrannical in any way, simply because Providence gave me the chance of taking you from people who were no more your parents than I am, and helping to make you what you are—a lady. But if you are not a *happy* lady, of course I might as well have left you in the wood: depend upon it I shan't forget that, my dear, whatever happens. Whereas you will not forget, I'm sure, that you've no other friends than me and Madame Lamont, and you will listen to what we may advise for your good. You know what I mean. Don't mind me if I say young heads get mischievous fancies into them sometimes, which *don't abide when you are led astray by them*. And then you're in a pretty plight. I won't mince matters, but tell you I'm alluding to Mr. Lamont; and that is all I need say. You think him hardly used; I don't. And I should be a great deal worse than sorry if my dear little girl were to do what she is warned of in Scripture (if I remember rightly)—*lean her side against a broken reed*.

But I know what you'll say when you read this—at least, I know what I should say if I was in your place—that when people who are dependent are offered advice it comes as sharp as a command. Now that's the bother. I've been thinking about it very seriously indeed; and for a variety of reasons that you will understand clearer by-and-by, I am resolved to put an end to it. The sooner you become independent of everybody now, my dear, the better; and from this time I drop the name of Guardian (though you cannot tell how I have liked to hear myself spoken of by that name), and am only your friend as long as you choose. Madame Lamont has been lucky enough to get three new pupils this half-year, at the last moment; and I have made an arrangement with her that you are to remain now as under governess, I suppose you may call it, for two years, *at a salary*: you having still the advantage of the masters who come from Weymouth. The salary is not much, but with economy it will do. And this is the last thing I expect of you, to accept the arrangement. At the end of two years you will be fit to set up as a governess where you please; and though I do not like the idea of your being a drudge, as governesses often are, it is all that lies before you, except a happy marriage; which I hope my dear will make in time.

And so I have done with you as a guardian. Accept the little note I enclose to set you up at starting; it is the last I shall offer you, unless you are in need. You do not misunderstand? You are your own mistress a little earlier than you might have been, that's all. Only I hope you'll take no important step yet awhile without consulting me; but I shall feel comfortabler with less responsibility, and I daresay we shall make no more mistakes because you have greater liberty to choose for yourself. Trusting you will see my motives clearer by-and-by than I can express them now, I remain,

Your affectionate

JOHN ABNEY DENZIL.

P.S.—One thing more. I send you a dozen of gloves, because ladies like to have them nice, I know; and they are not easy bought by little governesses on twelve pounds a year.

In this letter my guardian did me an injustice. He supposed I should misconstrue his motives—that I should understand them “by-and-by.” They were clear to me in a moment; for during these last eventful days

there were times when I had done *him* the injustice of fearing he might always expect submission in return for the benefits he had conferred on me. Strange to say, my absolute dependence on his kindness came home to me for the first time when he asked at Brighton what I had thought about my future : and now I was touched beyond measure to find that no sooner had an occasion risen when kindness might have passed into tyranny, than he took means to make me "my own mistress." Of course there were other motives of which I had no conception then, but they all were linked with the generous determination to relinquish *control* over one who owed to him all the good she had found in the world, and who had no other friend.

That was a proud and happy day for me. The climax was reached when madame—after making me blush with a playfully ceremonious speech, addressed to her dear Miss Forster—led me to a pleasant little sitting-room on a level with the garden, and told me that in future it was to be mine. "You will like to be alone, sometimes," said she, "to read your own books and build your air-castles, and so we have furbished up this retreat for you. Lisabeth calls it Miss Forster's room, already ; and we, the *other* schoolmistresses, will be careful to respect it accordingly."

Very bewildering but delightful was all this. My own mistress—earning bread and wage, and therewith the dignity of a private sitting-room, besides the sweet privacy of it for my books and thoughts, which was better than all. To be sure, there was some embarrassment to suffer at first, from the resentment of young ladies who had been my fellow pupils, and who could not tolerate my rise in the world; but I invited them to tea in my dear little room sometimes, and managed so well as to keep their love for Margaret, while I gained their respect for Miss Forster.

The quiet unostentatious deference of Lisabeth contributed greatly to this result. Indeed, we two became close friends, just as I imagined we should become. Not that there was much conversation between us ; but Lisabeth seemed always to remember the one secret point of agreement where our minds met, and so did I. And it was comfortable to know that my thoughts about Arthur Lamont were not the thoughts of a foolish girl only, but of a wise old woman too—excepting the nonsense-thoughts, of course. She had no knowledge of them, or I should have been denied the information that "a letter has come from Brighton this morning," or "a letter gone to Brighton to-day," which was all I ever heard about Mr. Lamont after our arrival home—all that even Lisabeth said. Madame and her daughter kept strictly silent; and I understood what that signified too well to inquire. Besides, the effect of Mr. Denzil's letter was to make me more than ever unwilling to do or dream what might displease him.

But the nonsense-thoughts did come in sometimes—I confess it; not, however, in what might be called a melancholy or a yearning way if by

a poet, but rather as a bridge over which I passed, on evenings specially sweet and still, into the land which is peopled by love-dreams. What these dreams were I do not know, and never fairly knew. Who can say more of them? They permit no interpreters in their own domain; and when you come back there is nothing in your memory, only that you have *been there*. It is with you as it once was with good-natured housewives: fairy-folk have come while you are asleep, and have swept the house for you, and ordered it. When you wake, the house is swept, the heart is purified, even your eyes seem purged of the "light of common day;" but they who have done all this are gone: the good folk vanished at the first gleam of morning—the dreams at the first glimpse of returning consciousness.

Nevertheless, it was no more than natural, I hope, that I did think a great deal of Mr. Lamont, even apart from his sad story and his misfortunes. In the quiet of my little room I had so much leisure to ponder that saying of his—how he felt that in leaving me his very last chance was gone; and given a soft October evening, with a great round moon risen before her time, it was not hard to make out all he meant by that. The hardship was rather in the bashful thought that his last chance was a love he could not gain, or dare not ask. Now in every woman there is a belief, beginning with her first breath, that the love of some *one* woman has virtue enough to breed courage in a coward's heart, strength in his feeble will, goodness in his evil; and though the woman may not love the man, yet when he says, "You are my last chance," her heart quakes at the thought of denying him. Who is she that she should not risk a sacrifice which may end in a triumph more glorious than the delight of those who rejoice over the "one sinner that repenteth?" And the sacrifice—if it come to that—is *natural*, for she is only a woman, he is a man.—It may not be quite fair to confess the profounder instincts of the womanly heart, but this is one of them: I found it out, as I tell you, on a soft October evening, sitting in the half-dark and thinking of Mr. Lamont.

Since this was the state of my mind, it is a little surprising that Lisabeth had no suspicion of it. She had many opportunities too: for she was often in the garden of an evening, pottering about my window with watering-can or garden shears, and all for the pleasure of seeing me and exchanging a word or two—if not on the subject she would have chosen, some other.

On one of these occasions she came tapping at the window, and I opened it, and she asked whether I had heard anything about "our Mr. Arthur" lately.

"Nothing," said I.

"Because," the old woman went on, "there have been no letters now for a fortnight and more, and I can't help misdoubting me things aren't as they ought to be. He's got worse, or he's going about like a beggar again—od rat him for a foolish young man! There's no mentioning of

his name to madame, and I don't write fit for him to see; but I'm a good mind to send to that place and see if he's there yet! I've been worritting my brains for an excuse, and can't think of nothing but houseleek. Well, houseleek used to be good for sprains when I was a gal. There'd be no harm in writing, would there?"

I could not suppose so.

"Only I forget the directions," said Lisabeth. "If you'd oblige me with *them*, I'll do it this night before I sleep!"

My writing-case was at hand, and I addressed an envelope, which the old woman carried off well pleased.

Next morning I learned how inconsiderate I had been in granting her request.

"It's gone!" said she.

"What is gone?"

"My letter. I say *my*, but the best-looking part of it was yours—the directions."

"Surely you did not send the envelope I addressed, Lisabeth?"

"What harm, miss? I couldn't have copied it decent; and gentle-folks are not pleased at letters coming to them with writing outside that looks like old hooks and skewers."

"But what will *he* think?"

"Think!" exclaimed the unsuspicious old woman, "that whoever did that was a credit to the school, my dear!"

Lisabeth's innocence was well for her, but not for me. All day long the unlucky accident disturbed me; for I felt sure Mr. Lamont would know who had addressed the letter, and it was impossible to say what fancies he might take about it. And what was in the letter itself? That was really an important question; and oh, how the day lingered!—how long it seemed before I might satisfy myself to what extent Lisabeth's indiscretions affected me!

The hour came at length, and the woman:—the good old woman with her close muslin cap like a widow's, and the snowy "tucker" that surmounted the short-bodied gown of a bygone generation. She came to my room on some trifling service, and I mustered courage enough to ask—

"What did you say in your letter to Mr. Lamont, Lisabeth? Will you tell me?"

"To be sure I will," she answered. "As far as I can remember, I said, 'Mr. Arthur, dear sir, you'll excuse the liberties'—but I've got one of 'em in my pocket—one of them that I wrote before it was done well enough to please me."

Lisabeth handed me the careful old scribble, and, impressed anew with the responsibility of her performance, solemnly seated herself while I read somewhat as follows:—

"Mr. Arthur, dear sir. You'll excuse the liberty of these few lines which I now take up my pen to indite, hoping you'll excuse an old woman

that was your mother's maid before you was born, and have been called Lisabeth ever since, though seventy-two last birthday. I heard of your accident, Mr. Arthur, and, if you believe me, much I grieved, being no secrets that you had no one to tend you, but was lone and friendless, such as made my heart ache when you come here looking like Pharaoh's poor lean kind, and all adust, and would not take bit or sup. It's a freedom to mention it; but then I was almost your mother as much as madame when an infant and growing up; so you'll kindly excuse. Likewise the liberty I now take in asking *how you are getting on*, Mr. Arthur, because I have not seen any letters come from you lately. To make houseleek ointment, good for sprains. Take a handful of the leaves gathered in the morning before sun up, and brayed them in a mortar, smashing with a rolling-pin will do; and that's all you've got to do. Very cooling. Try this, Mr. Arthur, and don't mind humouring an old servant to let me know whether you are there, because Miss Forster and me we hear nothing, whether you are ill or well, sick or sorry, and you *must know* how uncomfortable it makes us, thinking and thinking. I say, don't mind humouring an old servant, Mr. Arthur; but being such, and no right to be sending letters to you, perhaps you will write to Miss Forster instead, *who is a governess now*, which makes a difference. I now conclude," &c. &c.

Could anything be more unfortunate than this? To be sure, it was little likely that Mr. Lamont would suspect me of any part in the concoction of the letter; but such dreadful significance appeared in it—especially in the last sentence—that my eyes grew dizzy reading. "Send to Miss Forster, who is a governess now, *which makes a difference!*" what would he think of that? What would Mr. Denzil think, could he see the letter?

The "difference" they would recognize was my greater independence; and one would say, "She is poor, and free to choose then!" while as for the other, I knew how shocked he would be to imagine his "dear Margaret" so bold, so cunning, so ungrateful, as was suggested by this unhappy letter. And it was addressed in my handwriting, without doubt!

"Why, what's the matter?" Lisabeth exclaimed. "Is there anything wrong?"

"Very wrong, or very unfortunate. I can only say, Lisabeth, that if Mr. Lamont writes to me, as you have asked him to do, I must burn the letter unopened!"

"Burn it!"

"I *must*, or hand it to madame!"

"Oh, indeed!" said the old woman, and well I remember the really grand air with which she rose and walked out of the room at the same moment. "Then, of the two, perhaps you'll oblige me by burning it, miss!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARABLE OF THE SWORD.

LISABETH was no more seen before my window in the garden ; and whenever we happened to meet in passages or on the stairs, the old lady was generally engaged humming some psalm tune in a half-conscious way—signifying that while her mind was occupied neither in love nor hatred to me, it *was* occupied ; so that any chance word of courtesy in passing might easily be dispensed with on either side. I had offended her ; at the best, she “could not make me out ;” and now I began to feel lonely, shut out as I was from all apparent, active sympathy on every hand.

For several days, indeed, there was enough to think about in the prospect of a letter from Mr. Lamont : the letter which—dreaded at first, dreaded less as time went by, and at last almost desired—never came ! Well, there could be only one explanation of that : he had got cured sooner than had been anticipated, and was already on his way to exile before Lisabeth's untoward composition arrived in Brighton. Yes, he must have *gone* ; and then I discovered that at the bottom of my heart I never believed he would go !

Heaven knows whether I am more wicked or unreasonable than other women ; but Miss Lamont fell sick about this time, and I declare I was not very, very sorry ; for it gave me something new to think of. Much weariness, a little irritation, and too frequent a mind to brood over the differences between my lot and that of my companions, quickly succeeded the brief period when the delights of independence and the indulgence of innocent youthful dreams made every day pleasant. If Mr. Lamont had gone, there was an end to all speculation about omens, you see. Obedience to my guardian's wishes was no longer a merit ; and the pretty parliament of thoughts and fancies which used to assemble in my heart to discuss these things might as well be dismissed. And how could I spare them, since there was nothing to fill their place ? For meanwhile I had got back no nearer to madame or her daughter. Common kindness never failed amongst us, but we knew we were at cross purposes about Arthur Lamont, and the delicacy which veiled our contrary ideas on that subject muffled our sympathies also. But when Charlotte fell sick new sympathies were awakened, fresh interests were excited : and that is why I was not exceedingly sorry for it.

Fever it was which seized Miss Lamont—a low fever ; not dangerous but very troublesome. All madame's pupils were sent home as a matter of prudence, and (without my knowledge) Mr. Denzil was consulted about me. In his answer he said he himself was in great trouble, and could only suggest that if there was any danger of infection, the doctor might be induced to take me into his house for a while ; but he left the ques-

tion entirely to my feeling and discretion. I chose to remain of course; slipping a little note into madame's reply, to tell him how glad I should be if I could turn his trouble into happiness, in requital for his generosity to me.

As soon as the pupils had gone away, and the house was hushed, and life was all resolved into a plan for nursing Charlotte, matters began to mend. We were drawn together again—madame, Lisabeth, Charlotte, and myself—and were quite happy with our fever. Valley House was turned into a sort of nunnery for the nonce—with liberty of speech enough, if it were only soft and kind, and charming sloppy meals and sweet spoon-meats all day long. Never was there hate with chicken-broth or jealousy with jellies. Our differences were subdued: in the presence of sickness we each forgot the world—I my Mr. Lamont and his omens, madame her debts, Lisabeth her suspicion and resentment, and Charlotte—no, it would be too much to say she ever forgot that which had made her heart a desolation and a solitude, though she became more gentle, more human than I had ever known her to be.

Indeed, it was not long before I found that Charlotte accepted this illness as the natural but tardy end of her injuries, or cheated her imagination with that view of it.

I was sitting with her one afternoon when she lay very pale and weak, but with a lustre in her eyes which seemed to cast a light, a *borrowed* light, over all her face. And they were usually as dull as drowned eyes, and so heavy that you might count one, two, three, while they moved to look at you. She herself was conscious how they were burning now, for she asked me to give her her hand-glass, and stared into these eyes, saying—"I thought so!"

"And what did you think?" I asked, prepared to combat any evil auguries she might have found in her face.

"Why, don't you see how brilliant I am?"

"But is it not always so with people in these dreadful fevers?"

"Yes," said she, with her brother's very voice and manner, "all these dreadful fevers:—fever of youth, fever of love, fever of death. This is how I used to look, Margaret, when I was as young as you are; but those other two fevers have cooled out years ago. This is the third, I suppose."

"You know you do not suppose so, really. What does Doctor Mitchell say?"

"Give me that book," pointing to a volume which lay on a little table at her bedside, "and I'll read you a story."

"But what Doctor Mitchell says *isn't* a story," I said, trying a little joke since she would be so serious.

"He would find it difficult, though, to explain my case so well as this legend does."

Thereupon she began to read from the book—a volume of Scandinavian legends printed in the German tongue. The story I half forgot, and shall

spoil it in telling. It was about a smith who made armour for heroes, shirts of iron that were soft as flax, and impenetrable as the rock. But presently a sword was forged which no mail could keep out. The smith thought and hammered, and hammered and thought, to no purpose. The sword clove the work of weary days and nights at a blow. But the smith would not be discouraged, and at last, with infinite labour and cunning, he forged a shirt of mail ten times finer and stronger than any he had made before. He put it on, and going to the hero of the sword, bade him strike. "I had better not," said he. "Strike!" cried the smith; "you are afraid your fine blade will be broken." The other struck a downright stroke, and the smith laughed, for he had not even felt the blow. "Shake yourself!" said the swordsman. The smith shook himself and fell apart: he was cloven asunder.

"There!" said Miss Lamont, as the book dropped from her tired hand.

"I make nothing of that, except that it is a ghastly story, unfit for you to read just now."

"On the contrary, a very fit one; besides, it is familiar enough to me. Shall I tell you? Many years ago, I was stricken like that. My heart was cloven asunder; and I have been obliged to keep very still to keep alive. But it will hold together no longer, I think. It has been shaken by the hand that dealt the blow."

Shaken by the hand that dealt the blow! Is it so? thought I. Has Mr. Lamont told her, then, that her lover was a cheat and perfidious?—Perhaps he had done so before he went away. But probable as this explanation of Charlotte's figurative language appeared, I could not conceive it to be the true one; and, encouraged by the confidence she had shown me, I began to consider whether I might not ask her whose was the hand she spoke of, when I saw that she had fallen asleep.

Idly—for I understood little of German—I took up the book from which she had read, to pass away the moments with romance, while she had gone to learn once more that death may be sweeter than life. And as soon as I opened the leaves I made a discovery.

True, no instinct, no voice of nature told me, when my eyes rested on a paper covered with verses, that I looked on my father's handwriting! But I recognized it as the same as that which Charlotte had tested my acquirements with on my first evening at Valley House. I knew that the lines before me had been traced by the false lover and unfaithful friend, who, without being wickeder than many a man who goes about the world free and honoured, had ruined two lives beside his own. Two? Three! four! if I had only known it: but much of my knowledge was yet to come.

The eagerness with which I gazed on this yellow leaf blinded me for a long while to the words written on it. I saw there only pictures out of the story Mr. Lamont had told me; and glad I am to remember that it

was the *bettermost pictures* I saw. The scenes wherein the captain of hussars appeared conscience-stricken and foreboding, the memory that "he would not fire, for he was tired of his life"—these things always occurred to me first, and remained in my mind last, whenever I thought of him. I never imagined him the handsome, high-bred young man, winning as a woman; he was always to me the changed and remorseful figure which stalked away from Mr. Lamont's tent "in such a mood that I lost all my anger." How glad I am that it was so—I, his daughter!

Presently these obscuring visions floated from between my eyes and the paper. I read; and found it to be a poem based on the very legend Charlotte had repeated! The verses were written, apparently, just after the "pleasant afternoon of agony" of which Mr. Lamont had spoken, and they compared her broken heart to the cloven man, exactly as she had compared it. Moreover, there were phrases in the poem which she had used: "keep very still to keep alive," and "shook by the hand that dealt the blow." Only, the writer evidently meant his own hand; for the gist of the poem was that he feared to meet her any more, lest, trembling at his presence, the sundered heart should fall apart: whereas, if she kept very still, it might be healed by the slow-distilling balsams of time.

I was now satisfied that when Charlotte Lamont said her heart had been shaken asunder by her brother's hand (for it was that which dealt the blow, according to her belief), she spoke of nothing he had revealed, but uttered an unconscious prophecy of what he *could* reveal! How many times have we all delivered such chance prophecies, in times of sickness or excitement! What Miss Lamont meant to say, and what she thought she felt, was that her brother's reappearance had shocked her so much that her health had given way; but this was a fond, flattering delusion, cherished for its own sake, as all the delusions of her life had been cherished for many a year. She little knew how easily he could shake to the ground her very self, which, as it now existed, was nothing but a *mistake*.

Thinking all this, and much beside—painfully thinking how easy it is to fill the world with pain—I glanced from the old faded paper in my hand to her who had read it so many times with grateful grief, and saw that she was awake again, and watching me.

I stammered excuses, but she put them aside.

"No matter," said she—her mind fevered as well as her body—"I've had an opportunity of seeing that a poet can not only infuse his soul into his reader's soul, but into his face too. Read those verses for me, Margaret."

"No," said I, "we have had enough of murdered men and broken hearts."

"And yet you have a heart of your own to break, and I know, poor little fool, it is in a fair way of breaking now! But we will take care of that—I'll take care of that! Whether I get well, or whether I am to die, I'll tell you my story for your own sake; and if after that you fondle your illusions, so much the worse for you."

"And if you do," I thought to myself as I left the room rather angry, "I may be obliged to tell you *his* story; and if that destroys *your* illusions, so much the better for you! For they have lost all life and grace; they are nothing but dry bones; and it would be well if you left off fondling them, and turned to your own flesh and blood!"

CHAPTER XV.

OLD HOPES AND NEW.

AFTER a little while Charlotte Lamont began to recover—unwillingly, I do believe. Much of her later life must have been tinctured by secret misgivings that she had kept up her romance too long; and it was a sincere pleasure to her to think that her brother's return had kindled the smouldering ashes of her sorrow into a blaze, that its fires had seized upon her blood, and that she should die because of her faithful blighted love at last. This idea, this romantic hope it was that made her so much more gentle and human for a time. But she recovered; and when the doctor insisted on her leaving her sick-room "for a change" every day, there was an end to all that: she became her cold perverted self again—colder, indeed, and more perverse than ever.

At length the house was purged of the last breath of infection; Charlotte needed no other nursing than the cook's; and madame made a journey to London to see the parents of her pupils, and arrange for their return.

The next day after her departure was Sunday—one of those sweet Sabbaths when the very earth seems to rest from labour and change, and the air has nothing to do but to spread abroad the praise that ascends from the churches. Charlotte had not yet ventured from the house; but the afternoon was sunny and warm as any day in spring, though November had come; and I proposed to her that we should go to church together—a walk of nearly half a mile. "Not to-day," she said; "Lisabeth shall send us some tea into your room, and there we'll sit and look into the garden and talk."

We went to my room, and Lisabeth sent in the tea, and we sat and looked into the garden; but we did not talk very readily. Not a word was said, except some few about currant-bushes and currant-jelly, for half an hour.

But Miss Lamont had come to speak of more momentous things, and presently she began. I have said before that her speech was cold and distant, like an echo.

"I am going to redeem my promise, Margaret," she said abruptly. "Do you remember the first evening you passed in this house I gave you a book to read? I pretended, you know, that I wanted to learn how you had been taught; but the truth is I had been struck by your voice, which

is wonderfully like the voice of a man who was to have been my husband. Perhaps you remember, too, that I chose a book in which my name appeared, coupled with exclamations of love: that, of course, was for the miserable delight of hearing 'dear Charlotte, dear Charlotte,' repeated by a little girl with a voice like *his*. For he loved me as well as I loved him! I knew he loved me at that moment, though we had been long cruelly separated; and if he is alive he loves me at *this* moment; I am sure of it! For if ever there was a true heart——"

So she went on, extolling his beauty, his genius, his kindness, and declaring that she thought herself the happiest creature on the face of the earth when she found he loved her, and that she might hope to be his wife. spite of the hardness of her manner, no one could have heard her without being affected, or convinced she had loved him very dearly; but side by side with her picture of her lover I had to place Arthur Lamont's, and I believed it to be the true one.

"And now I have to speak of some one else," she continued, "some one who was not my lover, nor anybody's but his own." And then she repeated very much what Arthur Lamont had told me,—the same story, with such differences as may be imagined: they were nothing in fact, but everything in effect. She described a morning's happiness when her mother had driven her to a charming little house at Kensington, which she had bought, all furnished, "for a bride." She described the evening's misery, the evening of that same day, when they learned that Arthur had been taken to prison, and that they were irretrievably ruined.

"Godfrey brought the news; and he who never squandered a shilling, and who had been saying like a miser for me, was more distressed even than we were. I see him now pacing the room, asking what he could do, over and over again: and I had to answer that, for one thing, he must give up all idea of marrying a girl who had nothing but disgrace and poverty to bring him. And that is how our hopes ended! We parted. The house which was bought for a bride was sold to get a spendthrift out of prison. My mother and I had to begin a life of poverty, of debt, of hopeless slavery for our very bread, and that he preyed upon without scruple. Margaret, I know you have thought me unkind to Arthur, and I believe you think him a martyr. Now you know better: he is a shiftless, heartless sentimental, and if you ever cared for *him*, rejoice that he has been sent away from you."

Thus she ended the recital.

"And has Mr. Lamont been sent away?" I asked after a little while, during which time Charlotte's last words reverberated in my mind, calling on me to answer them.

"He has gone, at any rate: promising once more that he'll never come back."

"Then I do not rejoice. I am very sorry."

"I dare say, Margaret; but be content at his having ruined one woman's life, and that one not your own."

"If it was so!"

"If it was so?" she repeated in amazement. "What do you doubt?"

Carried away by a determination to do Arthur Lamont some degree of justice since his sister challenged it, I answered that I doubted whether she knew the truth.

"And what is the truth?" she asked, under her breath.

"He would never have told you himself, Charlotte, but he has borne unjust blame too long. You ought to have known years ago that——"

"That *he* was the injured party?" suggested Miss Lamont, seeing that I hesitated.

"Yes! As much as you yourself!"

The exclamation was too blunt. A change so dreadful passed over her face that I was appalled. It was not sudden, but gradual, as if she died and came to life again; or rather as if her old being writhed out of her brain and a new being possessed it. I was silenced.

After a few moments she drew her chair closer to mine where I sat by the window, took my hand in hers that was cold as ice, and said in a voice changed as her looks, "You do not go on." Upon which I made matters worse by answering in candid alarm, "I am afraid!"

"Afraid to acquaint me with the truth?" said she, laughing for the first time since I had known her. "It must be very terrible, then. But proceed, Margaret. 'As much injured as I myself:' how do you explain that?"

"He was deceived: that's all!"

"Deceived by——"

"His friend!"

"And his friend was Godfrey Wilmot. Who deceived me too, perhaps."

"Dear Charlotte, *I* do not think he deceived you purposely! He may have been sincere in his affection for you, though he could not have loved your brother to join in those debts with him, and then deny his share."

"Was it so?"

"It was. And they gambled. And Mr. Wilmot won your brother's money!"

"So this is how we were beggared! Did Mr. Lamont explain why he concealed his innocence so long, and why he never dared to say to *his* face what he has said to you?"

"But he did accuse Mr. Wilmot."

"No, Margaret—of nothing shameful. If he had done so, Mr. Wilmot would have killed him!"

Her cold hand tightened upon mine as she said this, and I shuddered to think how nearly she had approached the truth. But there was no emotion in her changed voice. All in the same tone she continued—

"And his mother, his sister—surely they were interested in this

revelation. Why was it never made to *me*? Did he explain that to you?"

I returned no answer.

"Did he tell you that?"

"Yes," said I, determined by her persistency. "Because he wished to spare your feelings, Charlotte! He thought it enough for you to be brought to poverty and disappointment, without knowing that Mr. Wilmot himself, whom you and everybody loved so much, had caused it all."

"Then I understand 'the truth' to be that he was a cheat, a dissembler, a villain! Now hear me, Margaret. I say it is false! and may heaven requite your lover's lies!"

With this startling exclamation she rose and left the room proudly. But I saw that insurrection had broken out in her heart, however she might strive to keep it down. She doubted: for her face still wore that changed look, which was never to depart from it.

I walked into the garden, longing to be refreshed by the cool air and the sweet evening scents. Lisabeth appeared there five minutes afterwards, humming her psalm-tunes as usual, but looking quite placid and friendly again. Little did I guess, little did she know as she sauntered toward me, affecting to be interested in myrtles and gooseberry-bushes, what magazines of disturbance slumbered in her pocket.

When she had approached near enough to be heard speaking softly, she said—

"You did not notice me come into your room, Miss Forster, to borrow your big-print Bible."

"Certainly not."

"But I did though, and took the book. And as it turned out I chanced to hear you say you were very sorry for something. Well, *he's not gone!*"

"How do you know that?"

"By what you said you'd burn! One came on Wednesday—another soon after I wrote, you know."

"Addressed to me?"

"To you, miss. But I misjudged about you; and I thought if you'd a mind to burn 'em without reading, or to show 'em to madame, I might as well keep 'em in my pocket till happen you thought better of it."

I held out my hand, Lisabeth gave me the letters, and left me to go my way to the further end of the garden, where there was a stile leading out to the meads.

There I sat, doubtful whether I would read what Mr. Lamont had written or not. One of the notes was an enclosure, and had evidently spent several weeks in Lisabeth's custody. The other had been sent direct to me from Brighton only a day or two before. If I read them,

which should I open first? Trifling with my curiosity, it soon got the better of me: I broke the seals and read.

Then I discovered how just had been my fears of the interpretation Arthur Lamont would put upon Lisabeth's letter. Without saying so directly, without penning a word that was not delicate and respectful, he evidently assumed that he might write without offence, and allowed his gladness that I had not forgotten him to appear in every line. It was more than gladness. There was gratitude and triumph in all he had to say: the burden of which was, that his omen was coming true!

"Behold whence I date this letter," he wrote; "not from the pauper's room of an hotel, but from a great handsome house, which, for anything I observe to the contrary, belongs to me. And, if so, it is your gift; for you gave me courage, energy. Do you know what I did with the miserable little book you brought me? I put it on my table whenever I ate; at night I placed it on my bed, vowing by the hand I could see upon it always that I would go adrift and be a wreck no more. If I say, this was for your sake, I only mean that you would rejoice to know me leading a useful life at last: and that, for my part, I covet the good opinion of the wisest heart that was ever so young."

And then he went on to say that, having thought of me and resolved, he thought of me and accomplished the resolution. Was there not an old gentleman he had heard of in the town whose sons had been taken from a public school, because one of them had been ignominiously thrashed in the playground? And was not the gentleman a soldier? "'I will go to this ancient monsieur,' said I. 'He loved to talk with me in the coffee-room here about my campaigns, and the art of war, and his sons, and vintages. I will think of Margaret Forster, and demand to be made tutor to those indefensible boys! He may resist, but the signs are against him!'

"I went—he was helpless. A few formalities—a letter from my colonel in England, one from my general in Africa (who know what *you* know), one from my own old tutors—the affair is complete! I am military and general tutor, secretary and gossip, at a hundred guineas a year, table, suite of rooms, projects of travel—voilà! But I beg you to observe, this is only the beginning. Proceeding in my scholastic career, I am already building a military academy—in the air—and have invented five-and-twenty infants in preparation for that academy. They are irreproachable infants. Their parents are rich and generous.

"Trifling apart, this good fortune you have brought to me—you alone; but I meant to have kept it secret awhile. Madame and my sister think I am gone to kill or be killed in the Caucasus; and I, being good-natured, would not undeceive them too soon. To you I dared not write; but Mistress Elisabeth—once my nurse, always my friend—sends me a kind letter of inquiry, and she says *you are a governess now!* I know not what that means. Are guardians like friends and sisters? What has happened to cast you upon the world? I tremble when I ask myself this

question: surely it is a momentous one. Will you let Lisabeth tell me? If it be so, may I know it? Or, better tell me if it is *not* so: I am desperate enough to say *silence is what I wish.*"

And the letter having been kept in Lisabeth's pocket, silence had answered him as he desired!

Was it possible to misconceive the gaiety that animates this letter, or not to see the hopes that peep out between the lines? As for the other one, a glance at the seal and I saw enough. It was stamped with a new device—a hand clutching a flower, with "Omen" for motto!

I hardly know how I read the later note. Its purport was that he could not tell what a perverse and unreasonable pleasure he had found in the no-answer to his letter which declared me friendless; but silence for ever would be no delight. The father of his pupils had proposed a six-months' tour on the Continent with the boys; and though he (Arthur Lamont) was once upon a time resigned to going from England without exchanging another word with me, he could only do so now at my command. "Not that I would put you to the pain of saying 'No.' It will be enough to tell Lisabeth to send me her precious receipt for salve over again, if I am to be bruised by a refusal. But if you do not forbid me, I will be at Valley House on Sunday, to confound Charlotte with my respectability, and to take—I hope—fresh courage from the new governess."

Sunday? This was Sunday! Oh, Lisabeth, Lisabeth, what a mischievous old woman were you!

The day began to wane—perhaps he would not come! I listened—all was still. I looked over the meadows, ribanded by a path which led from the highway to the House—no one was in sight. So I read those melancholy letters again, and laid them in my lap to think of them,—of them, and of Charlotte, and how those two would meet now, if he carried out his purpose of coming. There was so much to think of, indeed, that I forgot to look over the meadow again, till a gay "Holà!" sounded not fifty yards away.

I started to my feet, and of course Arthur Lamont knew they were *his* letters that fluttered from my lap to the ground.

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